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THE

FATHERS OF THE DESERT;

OR, AN ACCOUNT OF

THE ORIGIN AND PRACTICE OF MONKERY

AMONG HEATHEN NATIONS;

ITS PASSAGE INTO THE CHURCH; AND SOME WONDERFUL
STORIES OF THE FATHERS CONCERNING THE
PRIMITIVE MONKS AND HERMITS.

BY HENRY RUFFNER,

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VOLUME I.

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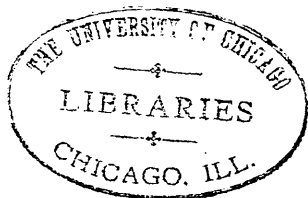
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PREFACE.



THE author was led to compose this work, first by reading in the Christian Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries, some strangely romantic legends of the hermits and founders of monastic societies in their days ;—and secondly, by discovering a remarkable resemblance between Christian monachism, and that which has existed from very ancient times among the Hindoos and the Boodhists of Eastern Asia.

The fact of this resemblance struck him as so curious and so interesting, that he determined to investigate it, and see whether he could trace out any connection between religious institutions so remote in place, yet so much alike in form and in spirit. He found that the same principles of religious philosophy, led to the same unnatural practices, among idolators before our Saviour's time, and among Christians in the 4th century. How came these heathenish principles into the Church ?—That was the next question. The author has attempted to trace them from their source in the distant East, through Egypt, Chaldea and Persia, into Western Asia and Greece. Thus they got first among the Jews, and finally into the Church, where they produced all the extravagances of monkery, and other kindred errors and superstitions.

The first part of the work is taken up with a brief and plain account of the religious principles of the Hindoos, the Boodhists, and other Eastern nations, and—so far as they existed—of the penances and monkery that grew out of these principles. The

reader, if he has not heretofore informed himself on these matters, will here meet with some curious and amusing facts, and in a religious point of view, instructive also.

Some following chapters give a simple and intelligible sketch of those principles of the Grecian and Jewish philosophies which were derived from Eastern Asia,—the monastic sects of the Jews,—the gradual rise of asceticism in the Church, until it ripened into monkery, under the influence of those principles of philosophy which came from Eastern Asia.

The second part of the work consists mainly of legends and anecdotes translated from the Fathers, giving a lively portraiture of the religion of those times, and a strangely romantic view of the wonder-working saints of the 4th and 5th centuries. Strangely romantic their stories are, whether we consider what is true, or what is evidently fictitious, in the accounts which the Fathers give of them.

The author has bestowed much labor and research on the work which he now presents to the American public. He has endeavored to make it amusing as well as instructive. He has therefore avoided dry and tedious dissertations; he has mingled story and anecdote with solid matter, and brought before the American reader in a connected view, what he found scattered in many books, chiefly in foreign languages. As no writer in our language has occupied this field of religious literature, he hopes that the unlearned reader will find in these *Monkiana* much that is new to him; and if it be not also interesting and instructive, the fault must be in the author's mode of presenting it, rather than in the subject matter of the book.

HENRY RUFFNER.

Virginia, May, 1850.

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CHAPTER I.

NAMES DEFINED, WITH A GLIMPSE OF EARLY MONACHISM IN THE CHURCH.

THE Church had been planted more than 200 years before it produced that moral prodigy—a monk. Idolatrous heathenism had generated this strange form of religious enthusiasm, many ages earlier. Corrupted Judaism had taken of the Gentile seed and planted it in the congenial soil about the Dead Sea and in the fiery sands of Egypt, where it was found growing by Christianity, but for a long time despised and rejected. At last, however, Christianity herself became sufficiently impregnated with heathenish superstition and philosophy, to bear in her own bosom a variegated brood of monks, who strongly resembled their cousins of the elder stock among the idolatrous Gentiles of the East.

But, what is a *Monk*?—According to the primitive idea and the proper sense of his Greek name, *Monachos*, he is a man who leads a solitary life,—who separates himself from human society that he may devote himself to sanctifying exercises. He has renounced all wordly pursuits, property and pleasure. He exercises himself continually in chastity, fasting, watching, prayer, and combats with evil spirits. He macerates his body with hunger and exposure to the elements. He mortifies to the utmost all the desires of his corporeal nature: he denies himself all the pleasures of the earth, and makes a purgatory of the world, that he may gain the paradise of heaven. Such is the primitive idea

of a monk. But the modern monk varies from the primitive pattern. We shall see presently how this variation came to pass.

A moral discipline founded on principles similar to those of monkery, was in use among the Greek philosophers before the birth of Christ. They called it *Askesis* or *Exercise*. Some Jewish sects adopted it before the Christian era. They who practiced this discipline were called in the Greek language *Ascetics*, that is, *Exercisers*.

The Ascetics, though they proceeded in the way of the monks, did not always nor necessarily go so far. Their system of *Ascetism* was generally a defective sort of *Monachism*. It contained the germ which by unfolding grew into monachism. But Ascetism, although it was inoculated into Christianity even in the first century, did not expand into monachism until the latter part of the third century.

As Grecian *Ascetism* originated with the philosophers, and was in earlier times practiced by them and their disciples almost exclusively, so they who *exercised* themselves according to the strict rules of the philosophers, were said to *philosophize*, and every system of ascetism was called *philosophy*. The Christian Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries applied the same terms to the monachism of their days: he who practiced it was said to *philosophize*, and the system of its doctrines and rules was dignified with the name of *philosophy*.

When the Christian life began to vary from the simple purity and social benevolence of the gospel, it first took the form of *ascetism*,—a mild ascetism, which it pushed gradually into monachism, by augmenting the severity of its exercises, and then fleeing from the face of human society into deep, and yet deeper and drearier solitudes. At first the ascetics merely avoided promiscuous company, and spent much of their time in private devotion. But then a private room in the house sufficed, or a secluded place in the neighborhood gave them the requisite secrecy for meditation and prayer. But habits of seclusion, like other habits, would

naturally grow upon devout minds, that preferred the secret to the social exercises of religion. As every thing mysterious in religion makes a strong impression upon common minds, especially in a superstitious age, so the very obscurity in which the ascetic involved himself and his devout exercises, invested his character with a sort of awful sanctity in the eyes of the multitude, and made many esteem this manner of life peculiarly holy and sanctifying. Therefore many would be inclined to embrace it, and the tendency would be to carry out its principles to perfection. Then too the bloody persecutions of the third century drove multitudes of Christians into the deserts for safety. The ascetics, and those who were ascetically inclined, found the solitary life agree so well with their notions of spiritual perfection, and become by use so congenial to their feelings, that the return of peace to the church could not recall them to their homes and friends again. Many remained of choice in the deep solitudes to which necessity had driven them at first. Thus monachism began.

The term *Monachism* signifies the manner of life peculiar to monks, and so does the term *monkery*; which is however a disrespectful appellation, and has reference to the superstitions and follies of the monks.

Because the first Christian monks retired to uninhabited places, and especially to the deserts of Egypt,—they were called *Eremites* or *Hermits*, that is, *Men of the Desert*. In modern times a hermit is a monk in the original sense of the term, that is, a recluse or solitary man, in distinction from the monks generally, who since the fifth century have lived in societies of their own profession.

At first every monk sought to be what the name imports, a dweller in solitude. He shunned the company of mankind, even of his wife and children, if he had a family,—even of his fellow monks in the lonely wastes. Of these holy recluses like himself, he might tolerate occasional visits; but he shunned all habitual companionship with human occupants of mortal clay. By him the face of a fellow man was not regarded as the “human face

divine ;" it was a thing of vile flesh and blood, a symbol of base animality, of sinful carnality, of decaying mortality. The human voice made no music in his ears ; it was formed by organs of dust in the atmosphere of the earth ; its melodies were dangerous to the soul because they gave it a carnal pleasure. He despised and hated his body, as the seat of appetites and of senses, which defiled the soul whenever they afforded it a sensible gratification. He felt bound therefore, to war against them, and to sanctify the soul by inflicting on his vile, sinful body all sorts of indignities and mortifications.

Yet, with a strange inconsistency, most of the early monks of Christendom were *anthropomorphists*. They believed that the infinite God had the bodily form and members of a man.* With a wonderful degree of ignorance and irrationality, they took in a literal sense those Scripture phrases which speak figuratively of God as having organs and members like ourselves. A well-instructed child of seven years old has sufficient intelligence to understand such phrases aright. But the monks took everything in a literal sense, which they read or heard in the Scriptures ; and this ignorant simplicity of theirs was the ground-work of their monachism.

They conceived also that angels and demons had bodies of a fine, elastic material, which these spiritual beings could expand, contract, metamorphose, and render visible or invisible to human eyes, just as they pleased. They imagined that these heaven-born spirits could lust after earthly things ; and had so much of the grossness of human nature, as to prove dangerous sometimes to the flesh and bones of men, and even to the chastity of women. These silly notions about angels and demons were not peculiar to the monks, however ; learned Fathers of the Church, and even reasoning philosophers, entertained fancies of the same sort ; and there yet lurks even in the Protestant mind a remnant of these old superstitions.

Most of the monks—especially if they were monks of note—

* See Sozomen's Ecclesiastical History, Book viii. chap. 11.

thought it necessary to let a servant or friend,—who was always an admirer and reporter of their sanctity and their miracles,—approach them once in a while with a supply of indispensable food for their contemptible bodies. But some considered this custom an imperfection that called for amendment. The solitude of such monks had a flaw in it; and the bread which they received, though it might be like a stone, was yet made by art and man's device, and had about it the look, if not the savor, of human comfort. Therefore these scrupulous brethren would have no such thing. Aiming at a perfection as nearly angelical as could be attained whilst they had any remnant of flesh and blood, they made themselves superior to vulgar humanity by going stark naked, and feeding—when they must feed or die—upon the raw plants which they happened to find in the desert. They thought, and others thought also, that it was a miraculous token of divine favor, when their bare bodies grew all hairy like the wild beasts of the same desert. Having thus made wild beasts of themselves, they had no objection to the company of bestial hermits like themselves—lions, hyenas, and wolves. We read of their associating occasionally with these, which they seemed to prefer to the wild goats and wild asses that roamed through the same vast solitudes. But they had no particular aversion to any sort of beasts. What they dreaded was the sight of men—and above all, of *women*, whom they esteemed more dangerous than lions, or serpents, or the devil himself.

One reason why these saintly savages preferred beasts of prey to others of gentler kind, was probably because the ravenous eaters of flesh became very meek and pious, and learned to eat raw vegetables, like good monks, when they associated with one of these hairy men of God: and one reason—but not the only one—why they shunned human society, was, that it spoiled their conversation with heaven and made the angels shy. These heavenly messengers would not visit them familiarly—(I speak as a monk)—until they had weaned themselves thoroughly from all human attachments and human society, and had renounced every-

thing in the world that was grateful to the natural feelings of man.

Let not the reader suppose that we are drawing an imaginary picture of enthusiasm run mad. We delineate the very image of the saintship most in vogue and most admired in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Church's history—those pattern centuries of a perfect Christianity in the estimation of Puseyites and other pretended Protestants, in whom the old leaven of Popish superstition is yet fermenting. We draw our sketch from the writings of the revered Fathers of those centuries, whose admiration of this monkish saintship knew no bounds, and whose graphic descriptions and high praises of it will appear in the following documents which we have translated from their works. This is the sort of sanctity which was believed to confer miraculous power, and to entitle the practitioner to the very highest place in the kingdom of heaven. Of its ten thousand wonderful doings on the earth, in those days, the reader will find many recorded as indubitable facts in the documents just alluded to. If he can believe the tenth part of them, his faith must be founded upon the presumed infallibility of the holy Fathers, who recorded them for the edification of believers.

We said before that some of the hermits retained so much of the dregs of humanity, as to have settled abodes and to eat bread. These were obliged in the course of years to relax somewhat of their exclusiveness. The fame of their extraordinary fastings, prayers, psalm-sayings,* and combats with the devil and his legions away out in the deserts, soon spread through half the villages and cities of Christendom. Admiring multitudes, especially from the populous valley of the Nile, were soon attracted to their places of exercise, eager to behold such spiritual heroes, and to enlist in the holy war under their victorious banners. In vain did they refuse admittance to those who beset their doors, and watched day and night about their hiding places. In vain

* We had written it *psalm-singings*; but the low monotony of their solitary repetitions did not amount to sing-song.

did they fly from one solitude to another; in vain, attempt to conceal themselves in the most dreary wastes, in the most secret dens of the most desolate mountains, or the obscurest retreats of distant islands: still their secret found vent;—the faithless companion or two that waited on them in their wanderings, or the silly demons that infested them everywhere,—would blab, and draw an admiring crowd of candidates for discipleship around them.

Overcome at last by such persevering importunity—now when their fame was at its height and wondering curiosity at its utmost stretch—they yielded finally to what seemed to be the will of heaven, or to the express command of an angel;—they emerged from their caves, or whatever else had concealed them from human eyes;—vouchsafed to take charge of their waiting followers, and to instruct them in the mysteries of their wonderful sanctity. In such way it was that St. Antony, St. Pachomius, St. Hilarion, and other fathers of monachism, first came to establish schools of associated monks. At first however, the disciples were not congregated in one building. This would have been too great a departure, all at once, from first principles,—solitude being the essence of primitive monachism. Neither had Antony's monks and others like them, any formal vows or written regulations. Those of the same school only lived so near to one another in separate cells, that they could assemble once in a while in the open air, to hear the instructions of their holy father, and perhaps to join in some act of devotion. Then every man to his cell again, and to his solitary exercises, apart from every other. Solitude was still the general rule: social meetings were the exception, and that restricted to the utmost: no conversation, no, not a word nor even a look,—not even so much as “how do you do, brother.”

The next step was to organize these fraternities under an established system of rules. This was done first in the Upper Thebaid (the uppermost province of Egypt), by St. Pachomius. So important a change in the primitive system of monachism

could not be effected without divine interposition. An angel appeared to the saint, who had now attained a high degree of sanctity,—handed him a board with a system of rules engraven on it, and ordered him to organize monastic associations under that system. This occurred some years after Antony had taken charge of the first school of monks in the Lower Thebaid. Other experienced masters soon founded other schools and associations in other parts of the country, chiefly on the loose plan of the great St. Antony, who, of all the fathers of monachism, retained most of the original solitary principle. But the *angelic* system of Pachomius ultimately prevailed in Egypt, and was adopted with improvements in other countries. It allowed three monks to occupy each separate cell; but forbade conversation, and made them hide their faces from each other by veiling them with a sort of hood.

Not many years later, Saint Basil the Great, in Asia Minor near the Black Sea, first established *monasteries* in the modern sense of the term.

At first every single monk's place of exercise was his *monastery*, were it den, hut, hole in the ground, or old ruined house. Antony made his disciples build their monastic cells so far apart, that one could not hear another at his exercise. But as Basil's monks lived in a rather cold climate, the founder had them congregated in rather large buildings, with adjoining cells like a modern monastery; though each brother's cell was still his private monastery, in which he spent the most of his time. In Antony's schools, each monk did his little eating and drinking in his own cell, and provided for himself according to the primitive plan. Pachomius, as we have said, clubbed his monks. Each club had a common table in their cell, but then they were to be mute at table, and each to have his hood so drawn over his eyes that he could see his food, but not his fellow's face. Eating was a base affair at best; to season their mean, scanty meal with friendly looks and words, would have made it a social pleasure—the very thing that a true monk should abominate. But St. Basil's monasteries had

not only a *chapel* for social worship, but a *refectory* for social meals, at which all sat down together. But to correct the evil tendency of this sociability, all had during the simple meal to give mute attention to something sacred, that was spoken or read in their hearing ; and while their ears were occupied with the edifying sounds, their eyes were to be bent upon the table where their food lay.

In Palestine, and thereabouts, there was in those times a peculiar sort of monastic establishment called *Laura*, which consisted of a central church or chapel, surrounded at some distance by a circle of monastic cells, standing separate, and each occupied by a monk. This arrangement was designed to unite the original solitary system with periodical assemblages for instruction and worship.

The head of a monastic society was called *Abbot*, which is the Syriac word for father. But as this was a title of respect often given to private monks of advanced age, the head of a society in Egypt came to be called *David* ; and the common Father or head of many societies, was called *Archimandrite*, that is, the chief of a mandra, or sheepfold, as the term signifies. In the western countries of Europe, where Latin was spoken, the head of a monastery was often called *Prior*, though the building might be called either *Abbey* or *Priory*.*

The primitive hermits and founders of Christian monachism, were in after times distinguished as *The Fathers of the Desert*.

Many of the primitive monks did not approve of the social system of monachism, even in its most restricted form. They regarded it as a corruption of the perfect way of holiness. Though solitude might still prevail over society in the ratio a hundred to one, still there was something of society, and that of the worst kind—*human* society ; and thereby something in the likeness of worldly comfort, which was not to be endured by a holy man. Many, therefore, adhered to the primitive pattern ; they hid

* See for the signification of these several terms Du Fresne's Glossary, and Fosbroke's British Monachism.

themselves in deep solitudes, and rejected all society except that of beasts, which was innocent ; of demons, which was unavoidable ; and of angels, which was unattainable until they had divested themselves of all earth-born humanity.

Now as monachism branched off into diversity, new names had to distinguish the several classes of monks. Those who lived in communities under an abbot, were called *Cenobites*, from their living together in common ; the solitaries were called *Anchorites* from their living apart, each one to himself. Between these two was a third class called *Sarabaites*, who lived two or three together in a cell, but apart from all other society. Their plan was generally disapproved by the Fathers of the Church, because there was less absolute solitude than among the *Cenobites*, and no rule or government.

There was still a fourth class who arose after monkery had gotten into general repute as the most perfect way of life, and the profession itself, independently of the moral character of the professors, began to be esteemed a holy thing. This, the least respectable class, were called *Gyrovagi* or *Vagrants*. They took up the trade of saintship as an easy way of living at the expense of others. They went about from monastery to monastery, and from house to house in the garb of monks, seeking hospitable entertainment, and like stray dogs, staying longest where they were best fed. Beggary and occasional robbery among those vulgar and unholy beings, the married working people of the world, afforded them supplies, often of better quality than the meagre food of the monasteries. They resembled the vagrant Fakirs of India and the vagrant Santons of Turkey.

Occasionally the *Cenobite* monks would become troubled in spirit, lest even the silent and joyless company of their fellow-monks at table and in church should defile them. Then they would get leave of their abbot to retire from the monastery into the neighboring deserts, where, in perfect solitude and extreme destitution, they would labor and watch and pray for months or years, to expiate the sin of their poor enjoyments in the flesh.

In process of time the Cenobites came to be distinguished into different orders, as new founders would arise and establish what they conceived to be more perfect rules of the monastic life. The orders were named sometimes after their founders, as the *Benedictines* from Saint Benedict, the *Dominicans* from Saint Dominic ; and sometimes the name had reference to some place or some peculiarity of dress, as the *Carmelites* and the *Capuchins*.

These orders were distinguished externally, as they still are, by the color and fashion of their costume : but their chief distinction was that between the working orders and the *mendicants* or beggars. The primitive hermits and the Cenobites generally, for a long time, professed to depend on their own labor for support. The Egyptian and Syrian monks employed their hands in weaving baskets and mats out of the palm leaves and rushes of the desert, whilst they occupied their minds with prayers and meditations, and sometimes their vocal organs with psalmodian dronings. It was partly the fear of the devil that kept them so piously busy ; for they judged rightly, that whilst their hands were occupied with good works and their minds with holy exercises, the omnipresent and ever-watchful fiend could not find a single point of their spiritual fortress unguarded, nor a single cranny or loophole where the smallest of his imps might creep in. But these worthy hermits considered manual labor as a matter of religious duty also, according to the apostolical maxim, If any man will not work, neither should he eat.

When we say that the good old superstitious hermits labored so worthily for their bread, we mean of course to except those savage perfectionists who went naked and ate grass, and those lazy parasites who went in monk's clothing from place to place, feeding upon the product of other men's labors. With these exceptions all the monks for centuries—Cenobites as well as Anchorites—held like honest men and good Christians, that saintship did not exempt a man from the obligation of supporting himself by his own industry. The Cenobites of those best ages of

monkery, such as the Tabennians of Pachomius, the Basilians of Basil, and the Benedictines of Benedict, all adhered to this principle ; and where the inmates of a monastery had a community of goods, as all the later orders of Cenobites had, there each brother was bound by rule to do his share of labor for the benefit of the community.

But in later times St. Dominic and St. Francis founded their orders upon a different principle. They considered productive industry as a worldly thing, and inconsistent with perfect saintship. They made it a rule, therefore, that no friar or brother of their orders, should defile himself with any sort of manual occupation : they were to devote themselves wholly to what was called the work of God,—such as fasting, praying, psalm-singing, preaching and begging. They built their monasteries in or near cities for the convenience of preaching, and of levying contributions on the wealthy and the industrious, by begging in the name of God and Saint Mary from door to door. Being esteemed the holiest of the holy, they were abundantly supplied by the pious ; nor were the wicked less liberal when their consciences troubled them ; for they were made to believe that giving to the monks was the surest way of purchasing the favor of heaven.

o easy a way of gaining spiritual honor and corporeal comforts, could not fail to attract many followers. Beggar-monks soon swarmed like summer flies in every Roman Catholic country. Thousands of them were continually going about as beggars, preachers, pardoners, and traders in saints' relics, in which they drove a very large and a very lucrative business.

All the monks of later times, both workers and beggars, were under a solemn vow of poverty ; which meant originally that they were to have no property, except a daily supply of necessities for their daily wants. But it came to mean, that while the individual members could have no private property, the order or community might have any quantity of any sort of wealth. Thus the vow of poverty did not prevent the members from making interest in all possible ways for their monasteries. So well did they ply the

consciences of the superstitious—and all were superstitious during the Middle Ages when monkery reigned—that the poor and the rich, the righteous and the wicked, all contributed to the lands and chattels of the monasteries, until the most of them became immensely wealthy. Then the brethren had no need to work or to beg any more. They could be as fat and as lazy as they pleased upon the princely revenues of their monasteries. And fat and lazy did the greater part of them become, and luxurious and profligate withal. Hospitable they were to strangers, and charitable, as they could well afford to be, towards the beggarly poor: and now and then a brother's peculiar turn of mind led him to employ his abundant leisure in literary exercises. As their lands and buildings were held sacred, even by warring barbarians; they preserved a portion of every country in Europe from desolation, during a 1000 years of ravage and of revolution. Thus did a wise Providence, through their means, preserve a remnant of civilization in the midst of barbarism and superstition, until Christendom was prepared for a new course of improvement, whose brightening ages shall not cease to roll, until they bring forth the glory of the latter days.

The term *Convent* is applied to both monasteries and *Nunneries*. In many places the same system of walls and buildings included both a monastery at one end and a nunnery at the other, with a chapel in which both monks and nuns met for worship, between them. This was a very convenient arrangement in more respects than one. The prying eyes of the world could not penetrate the sacred enclosure. We read without surprise that in many, if not most, of these establishments, an abominable licentiousness prevailed. It was the natural consequence of the celibacy, the wealth, the luxury and the laziness of these degenerate communities.

Before ascetism had ripened into monachism, the church had a class of sacred virgins, who professed to live chastely for Christ's sake, and who were cherished and lauded as the brightest ornaments of the church. These generally resided privately in the

houses of their relations; or several together in a separate house; until Cenobite monachism led to the establishment of nunneries, which were regulated upon the same principles as the communities of the other sex.

These sacred virgins were called by different names, such as *Moniales* and *Sanctimoniales* among the Latins, and *Ascetria*, female exercisers, among the Greeks; but the term *Nona* or *Nonis* (*Nun*), finally prevailed over all the rest. This term seems to have been originally Egyptian, and to have signified an elderly woman or mother; but it came to be applied to consecrated virgins as a title of respect, as the term Father was to priests and monks.*

We are sorry to say that some—perhaps in justice we ought to say *many*, if not *most*—of these darlings of the church, as early as the beginning of the third century, and for ages afterwards, disgraced their profession and the cause of virginity, by vain and licentious conduct. Would you believe it, reader, that, when it became disgraceful for priests to marry, and most meritorious for Christian females not to marry; just then it should become customary for unmarried clergymen and consecrated virgins to live together in the same house, sit together in the same private room, and *sleep together in the same unconsecrated bed*—yet under the profession of chastity all the while? Yet all this we shall hereafter prove from the writings of the holy Fathers of these purest ages of Christianity,—as Puseyites and very high churchmen esteem them to have been.

Nearly all the ancient nations believed that the air around us, and the circles of the heavens above us, were inhabited by countless numbers and various orders of spiritual beings, both good and evil. The Greeks called them all *Demons*; but the Jews called only the evil spirits demons, whose prince they called

* If the reader would investigate the origin and signification of this term, he may consult the writings of Jerome, Palladius, and Hospinian, and especially Bingham's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, book vii. chap. 4. § 8; and Du Fresne's *Glossary* on the word *Nona*.

Beelzebub or *Satan*, in Greek the *Devil*. The good spirits they called *Angels* or *Messengers* as Moses called them. The Christians imitated the Jews in the application of these names.

It was also the common belief of Jews and Christians, that whilst the demons were everywhere on the earth and in the air, the dry deserts were filled with legions of them. These waste and desolate places being scarcely habitable by man, were claimed by these malignant spirits as their own patrimony. They might with some reason claim it, on the ground, that as they did not, like man, need sustenance from the fruits of the earth, those desolate regions which yielded no sustenance for human flesh and blood, fell naturally to their lot. Whether such was their reasoning or not, certain it is—if we may believe the holy Fathers—that whosoever ventured to take up his residence in the deserts,—especially if he went for religious purposes—was sure to be infested by them in all possible ways ; with all manner of alarming sounds and fearful shapes and threatening actions and deceptive allurements. Nowhere would a spiritual warrior have so hard battling with the fiendish hosts, as in those hot and dreary solitudes which were naturally a sort of hell on the earth. But so much the greater was the merit of living there ; so much more the glory of defeating the Devil and his legions upon their own ground.

It was also the common belief of Jews and Gentiles, both before and after our Saviour's time, that demons took possession of the bodies of living men, producing madness and epilepsy, and so controlling the man's faculties as to speak and act with his organs. Those so possessed were called *demoniacs*.

Both Jews and Gentiles had also among them certain men who professed to have the power of *exorcising* the demons, that is, of driving them out of the bodies of the possessed, and thus curing the demoniacs of their madness, or epilepsy, or hypochondria, or whatever mental or corporeal disease these indwelling spirits had produced. Our Saviour cured all such cases immediately without form or ceremony, thus exerting what was

obviously divine power. But the *exorcists* pretended to produce the same effects by means of certain charms and drugs, administered with much form and ceremony.

The Christians of the third century and after ages, believed that demons still possessed madmen and epileptics, as they had done before ; that certain holy monks had, by a long course of ascetism and fighting with demons in the desert, gained such miraculous power over them, as to be able to cast them out like our Saviour. They believed also that pious persons duly authorized and instructed, could expel demons by the forms and ceremonies of exorcism, as the Jews had formerly done. The Christian forms were believed, however, to be much more efficacious than those in use among the Jews and unbelieving Gentiles, because the Christian *exorcists* employed the sign of the holy cross, of which the demons were terribly afraid—the name of the Trinity, which they could not bear—and profuse sprinklings of holy-water, which was much more efficacious than that of the Gentiles who were its inventors. Besides these powerful instruments, the Christian exorcists, like their Jewish and heathen predecessors, used sundry forms of prayers to God, adjurations to the demons in every sacred name, and execrations and revilings of these mischievous spirits ; who, it was believed, would often retreat from sheer vexation, when they found that the exorcist could out-curse and out-rail them, that is, beat them with their own weapons. * By means of this sort, the exorcists could expel the demons not only from persons, but from places and things infested by them. Among the different officers of the church from the fourth century downwards, was the exorcist or devil-driver. He continued to be an established officer in the Roman Catholic Church after the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and bishops occasionally exercised their genius in devising more powerful and demon-terrifying forms of exorcism, long after modern science and biblical knowledge began to be diffused through the nations of Christendom. Why have the Roman Catholic priesthood dropped this part of their infallible

system in this country? Or if they have not dropped what Fathers and Popes held for so many ages, why do they keep their exorcists and exorcisms so completely out of the view of the public, that we hear and see nothing of them?

We have mentioned this system of demonology, because it occupies a conspicuous place in the history of monachism, as the reader will see. But we must add that the early Fathers of the church were not unanimous in respect to the efficacy of the *exorcisms* practiced in their time. Origen of the third century and Chrysostom of the fourth, had the good sense to disbelieve in the power of exorcists to cast out demons, though they believed in the existence of demons and in demoniacal possession. But in their opinion demoniacs could be cured only by miraculous power. Thus Origen (Tract 35 in Matth.) says, "If any one ask whether it be proper to adjure demons, we answer, He who sees Jesus commanding demons, and giving [miraculous] power to his disciples, will say that to adjure [exorcise] demons is not according to the power given by the Saviour. It is a Jewish practice." He means that the power given by the Saviour to the apostles, was the power of working miracles; whereas the adjuration of the exorcists was borrowed of the Jews, and was a sort of magical operation. Chrysostom says, "We poor wretches cannot drive away the flies, much less the demons." Some centuries later, however, the great St. Bernard arose, who had power over the flies as well as over Beelzebub, the lord of flies.* The legend concerning him relates, that the flies once proving troublesome in his monastery, he solemnly cursed and anathematized them; and lo! within twenty-four hours, every fly of them was dead.

Ascetism arose in the church early in the second century, and grew by degrees, until it became monachism about the middle of the third century. By the end of this century solitary hermits had begun to multiply in Egypt. By the middle of the fourth century, Cenobites and Anchorites, male and female, had increased

* This is the meaning of the Hebrew name Beelzebub.

in Egypt to a host estimated to number 100,000. Some of them, ere long, became fierce and turbulent, and learned to fight men as well as demons. By this time, too, the monks of Syria and Asia Minor were counted by tens of thousands, and monachism had taken firm hold in Western Europe where Latin was spoken. Shortly afterwards, it had penetrated every nook and corner of the Church. In the sixth century monasteries were established in Britain and Ireland, and even in the Western Isles of Scotland.

After the year 400 it was no longer safe for any man to oppose the monastic system, as some had done before; for the monks were terrible enemies to deal with. They did much to overthrow heathenism and to establish Christianity. They did more to mix heathenism with Christianity, to promote every kind of superstition, and to bring in and sustain the monstrous system of Popish tyranny and persecution. Though in the dark ages of barbarian violence and confusion, they exerted a conservative influence; yet when the dark ages began to pass away, the monastic system became the chief obstacle to the reformation of religion and the general improvement of society.

CHAPTER II.

OF MONACHISM AMONG THE HINDOOS.

§ 1. *General Principles of the Hindoo Religion.*

MONACHISM originated in Eastern Asia a long time—probably fifteen hundred years—before the birth of Christ. Its fountain-head is the ancient superstition of Hindostan or India, one of the primitive seats of human civilization. The people of this country have sacred books, which must be nearly if not quite as ancient as the books of Moses; besides other books of their religion, written after the first, from time to time, in the ages of remote antiquity.

The language of these ancient books is called Sanscrit. Like the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it has been for many ages a dead language, and is the parent of most of the living dialects of Hindostan, as the Latin is of several modern languages of Europe.

The most ancient of the Hindoo books are four in number, called Vedas. They are filled, for the most part, with religious precepts, prayers, and hymns. They appear to have been the books of devotion used by the Hindoos in the primitive times of their religion. Like the books of Moses, they bear in their language, style, and matter, the strongest internal evidence of great antiquity.

Next in age to the Vedas, is a book entitled, *The Laws of Menu*, which unfolds the rules of this ancient religion. Then come a

succession of books called Puranas and Shasters,—besides divers more which need not be particularly mentioned.

These books form altogether an extensive library. They teach the doctrines, worship, mythology, and practical rules of this ancient system of religion. This system is on the whole very extensive and complex, and requires the study of many years for one to become thoroughly acquainted with it. We shall give a sketch of its leading principles, so far as may be necessary to show the primitive source of ascetism and monkery. It will be found among the principles of this ancient system of religious philosophy. All the monachism that has appeared in the world may be traced to this one heathenish source. In this and the following chapters, we shall trace these principles with their practical effects, over Eastern Asia and through Egypt and the Greek philosophy into the Jewish, and finally into the Christian, religion, where we see them finally developed into the monachism which exists to this day, and forms a remarkable feature of the Roman Catholic system of Christianity.

Hindoo books teach, that there is *One Infinite Eternal God*, who is the original source of all other beings, and comprehends them all in his universal essence. He is called *Brahm*, which, like Jehovah in the Hebrew, signifies *The Self-existent*.

But this sublime original Godhead is not the object of Hindoo worship. He is thought to be too great for human knowledge. He is hidden from the human understanding in the infinitude of his spiritual nature. He possesses no conceivable attributes, exercises no agency in the affairs of the universe,—but, unconscious of passing events, reposes in the eternal enjoyment of his own existence.

Brahm revealed himself in three forms or persons, called *Brahma*, the Creator, *Vishnu*, the Preserver, and *Siva*, the Destroyer. These three divine persons, considered as emanations from the infinite unknown Godhead, or as distinct unfoldings of the Universal Being,—constitute the *Hindoo Trinity*, or *Trimurti*, as they call them. Each of them has several names descriptive

of his attributes ; and each is of both sexes ; for every Hindoo god has his female counterpart, who is essentially one with himself. These three gods with their united goddesses, are the supreme objects of Hindoo worship, sometimes under one name and sometimes under another. It seems that the worshippers were in early times divided into sects ; some preferring the worship of one, some, of another, of these divine persons, to the exclusion of the rest. Each sect assigned to the favorite god certain attributes originally appropriated to another. Hence no little confusion appears in the modern accounts of their distinct attributes.

Besides the supreme Trimurti, the Hindoo mythology embraces many gods and goddesses of divers ranks and characters ; and these all have their worshippers—at least the more distinguished among them have ;—each individual choosing the particular objects of his worship, according to his fancy or the custom of his family or sect.

About their gods, their actions and transformations, the Hindoos of old invented a thousand allegories and fables, monstrous and absurd ; of which we need say nothing more, except that Vishnu, the Preserver, the second person of their trinity, is said to have gone through nine incarnations or births as animal or man, each time to effect some work of salvation on the earth, and that he will become incarnate once more, for the purpose of delivering mankind from their sins, and of renovating the world.

The Hindoo books teach that *all living creatures have immortal souls*. Some also assign souls to vegetables and even to minerals, as the ancient Egyptians did. All souls are considered as emanations or particles drawn from the universal spirit of Brahm ; which have been separated for a time from the common source of being, as drops from the ocean ; but all will be finally absorbed into it again, and thus lose their separate existence as individuals.

They teach, but somewhat obscurely, that some of the spirits of the heavenly world revolted and fell to the lower regions ;

where they are condemned to punishment, like the fallen angels of our theology. Certain it is, however, that spiritual beings of different ranks are believed to inhabit the regions above and below the earth, and that the lower ones are more or less malignant.

The doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, or *Transmigration of Souls* from one body to another, is a leading doctrine of the Hindoo theology. As every living creature on the earth, is supposed to have an immortal soul; so it is supposed, that souls after death pass into new bodies, of the same or different kinds from those which they left. A brute's soul may become a man's,—or, contrariwise, a soul may be degraded from a human body to that of a brute or an insect, or as some books teach, even that of a vegetable or mineral. Of course the faculties of the soul are more or less unfolded, according to the nature of the body which it occupies; its powers of reason and sentiment can be exercised in a human body, but are more or less cramped, or entirely suppressed, in bodies of inferior organization.

All souls were originally pure, when they emanated from the Universal Spirit; but *became defiled with sin by imprisonment in material bodies*, and by subjection to the passions which spring from their connection with earthly things. All the gross matter of the world, is believed to have a polluting influence upon the spirits that are invested with it; unless they overcome this evil influence by a resolute resistance and a severe mortification of the flesh. But few or none avoid defilement in their first incarnation, or imprisonment in a human body. Therefore, when they die, they transmigrate into other bodies of brutes or men, according as their sins are greater or less. Those who have been great criminals, are punished in hell for a time, and then become snakes, toads, or other loathsome animals—perhaps many of them in succession—before they gain admission into human bodies again, and have another trial as men.

Every human soul is now defiled with the sins of a former state, as well as with those which it may have contracted in its present

body. *Human life in this world is a state of probation, in which the soul has opportunity to work off its pollutions, and exalt its future condition, in the manner prescribed by the holy books.* Its defilement comes from the body, and from the material world through the bodily senses. It must labor to purify itself, therefore, by counteracting the influence of the body and of the sensible world. It must subdue the bodily appetites and desires—mortify all the senses—deny itself the pleasures of the world—separate itself as much as possible from material things—keep the body still—forget, if it can, all the things of time and sense—shut itself up in silent abstraction—float away in spiritual contemplations; and endeavor to lose its individual consciousness, by melting into the infinitude of its parent Godhead, as a vapor loses its distinct existence in the viewless expanse of the serene atmosphere.

When by such exercises the soul has purified itself from carnal defilements, and spiritualized itself into its original nature, it is released at death from further wandering through bodies; it ascends to the superior heavens, where it bathes in the pure essence of light; and finally reaches supreme beatitude, by losing its individual existence in the universal source of being; as the rain-drop is lost on the ocean from which it originated.

§ 2. *Of the Hindoo Doctrine of Penances or Ascetic Purification of the Soul.*

Learned writers differ in respect to the principle, on which the Hindoo ascetic performs his acts of austere devotion.

The Hindoo devotee, when he tortures his senses, is generally understood to be doing penance, or making atonement for sin. But some late writers, especially Ward, the missionary, affirm, that the Hindoo does not consider himself as a penitent, when he does these acts of self-mortification—but as a meritorious saint, who thus exalts himself above the common lot of mortals, and that on the ground of these performances, he assumes a proud superiority over the vulgar herd of his fellow men.

These views are not essentially inconsistent. The ascetic devotions of the Hindoos may be, and are probably considered to be, both penitential and meritorious. So far as they remove guilt and liability to punishment, they are penances; so far as they purify the soul, exalt its dignity and promote its spiritual happiness, they are meritorious. The devotee who both atones for his sin and merits happiness by voluntary sufferings, may on both accounts esteem himself holier and worthier than others, and assume a proud superiority over them.

We shall now proceed to give some account of the ascetic doctrines taught by the ancient Hindoo books.

The laws of Menu, written probably a thousand years before the Christian era, give the following directions to the man who would purify himself from sin, and become a saint of high degree.

“Let him seclude himself from the world, and gain the favor of the gods, by fasting, subduing the lusts of the flesh and mortifying the senses.”

One would think on comparing this general direction with the early monachism of the Church, that the Christian monks of the fourth century had been trained under the laws of Menu, and were ambitious to become saints of the Hindoo religion.

But Menu gives more particular directions to the candidate for high saintship.

“Let him crawl (says Menu) backwards and forwards on his belly;—or let him stand all day long on his toes. Let him remain always sitting or always standing; only at sunrise, noon, and sunset, let him go to the water and bathe himself.”

There we discover a remarkable difference between the ancient Hindoo ascetics and their Christian successors. The Hindoos associated holiness with personal cleanliness; the Christian monks despised the body too much to give it the honor of ablution. Hence they grew filthier without, as they grew holier within. But the modern Fakirs of Hindostan have learned to be as filthy as the monkish saints of the fourth century.

But says Menu in continuation, “Let him in the heat of sum-

mer kindle five fires about him. When it rains let him bare himself to the storm where it pelts the hardest. In the winter, let him wear a wet garment. So let him rise by degrees in the strength of his penances."

Here is monkish ascetism in perfection, differing slightly in mode, but agreeing perfectly in spirit, with that of the Fathers of the Desert, glorified by the Fathers of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, as the perfect pattern of the Christian life.

But, as the last sentence quoted from Menu implies, there were degrees of sainthood among the Hindoos.

A man might become a Yogi, or common saint, by withdrawing into solitude at forty or fifty years of age, either for life or for a term of years. If he began young, he might, after a certain number of years, return into the social world, and enjoy the respect and profit of his sanctity during the remainder of his days. But he who consecrated all his remaining years to monachism, and became what was called a forest-anchorite, attained to a higher degree of sanctity. One of the sacred books teaches, that he was too holy to be touched without sacrilege, and that his curse and his blessing had miraculous power.

The highest degree—that of a Sannyasi—could be attained only by twenty years of total seclusion from the world, and the complete abstraction of the mind from worldly thoughts and affections. Then the soul was prepared, without farther transmigration, to ascend to heaven, and after bathing in celestial light until the last tinge of earthly defilement was purged away, to consummate its destiny by absorption into the Divine Nature. A saint of this degree had such power with the gods, that they would instantly comply, not only with his formal prayers, but even with his slightest wishes.*

Having given this general sketch of the subject, we shall now give a more particular account of the Hindoo system of ascetical

* The above sketch is from Bohlen: *Das Alte Indien*. ch. ii.

sanctification. To make the account more intelligible, we shall first notice the Hindoo institution of casts, to which the people have adhered from the remotest times until this day.

The whole population were originally divided into four casts or orders, of which the higher possessed privileges that the lower durst not exercise. By intermarriage of the people of different casts, a large number of mixed casts were formed, each of which, like the original four, had certain employments assigned them, and had certain privileges and disabilities.

Of the four original casts, the Brahmins are the highest. They are the sacred cast ; and they have the exclusive privilege of exercising the priestly office, and superintending the affairs of religion and learning. From them the Hindoo religion is called Brahminism. They pretend that they were formed out of Brahma the creator's head, and are therefore entitled to rule and guide the whole people. The three inferior casts, namely, the military cast, that of the husbandmen and artisans, and lastly, that of the servants,—were formed respectively from the breast and arms, from the thighs, and from the feet of the creator.

Ascetic saintship, as might be expected, has been found chiefly, though not exclusively, among the Brahmins. Many Yogis or common saints have been of other casts ; but the Sannyasis are generally, if not exclusively, Brahmins.

The Hindoo Shasters, or holy books, describe four degrees or states of probation for the Brahmins who aspire to regular saintship. These degrees are adapted to the age of the probationer. They are as follows :

First degree ; Brahm Charee.

This is entered by the young Brahmin, sometimes, in early boyhood. Under an experienced preceptor he studies the Vedas diligently ; exercises himself in prayer, and learns to discipline his passions by abstaining from women, from anger, envy and revenge, and by acquiring the love of truth and other virtues. At night he accustoms himself to sleep little and that upon straw, or upon the skin of an animal, under the covert of a tree. His

food is of the plainest sort, and he avoids pleasant amusements, such as singing, dancing, and games of every sort. Morning and evening he practices ablution by dipping and sprinkling himself, and repeating many prayers. He wears also a particular sort of plain dress.

In this state of initiatory saintship, the young devotee continues from five to twelve years, before he enters upon the

Second degree ; called Gerishth.

When the probationer has completed his first degree, he may either return to his father's house, or proceed to this higher degree of sanctity, in which he can acquire much additional merit.

In this degree the exercises of the former were aggravated : the ablutions with their prayers and ceremonies, were increased. Most of the night was spent in contemplating the moon and stars and vault of heaven, with longing to mount up to the region of those bright orbs. In the first degree the devotee lived sparsely on charity : in the second degree he lived on what he could glean from the fields, or in failure of this, he begged a little rice, a part of which he threw into the fire as an offering to the Deutah (deified saint) and to the dead. The dress was somewhat changed.

Third degree ; called Banperisth.

When a Brahmin advances to this degree, he gives up all family cares, and retires finally from the world into some solitude, where he builds himself a cell or a grotto. If his wife through affection desire to accompany him, she may ; but then all sexual intercourse is at an end, and they become as cold as the rocks on which they repose.

“Here the hoary devotee—wraps his aged limbs in a vestment made of bark or leaves. He never cuts his hair or pares his nails. His ablutions with their attendant ceremonies are now trebled. Solitary and forlorn, he hangs down his head, bending under the weight of imaginary crimes. With reverential awe he reads and meditates, silently and assiduously on the holy Vedas. At night he lies on the bare ground. In the summer he sits often for days and

weeks beneath the broiling sun, with four fires built around him. In the rainy season he sits exposed to the weather. In the winter he sits all night in cold water. He fasts all the day and eats only in the evening. His only food is dried fruits and grain that grows wild, and these prepared by merely soaking them in water. If his supply fails, he goes to a town and begs a little rice, and then returns to his solitude.

"If worn down with labors, he desires to end his life, he may travel east or north, until he falls down and expires, or he may hang or drown himself at once. He is then sure of eternal happiness."

Fasting is one of the chief exercises of the Hindoo saints. The Holy Books prescribe a great variety of regular fasts, some of which are of long duration and intensely severe. In one of these fasts, the devotee is neither to eat nor drink during twelve days and nights. In another, he drinks only warm water. In another, he builds a fire before his cell-door, where he sits and inhales the hot air and smoke. There is another of fifteen days, during which he lives only upon leaves, seeds, &c.; and another of a week, during five days of which he lives on the produce of the cow, to wit—first, the milk; second, the curds; third, the ghee or clarified butter; fourth, the urine; fifth, the dung.

While fasting, every votary, must abstain from all sensual indulgence, all amusements, and all personal comforts, such as shaving, anointing himself, lying on anything except the bare ground.

We come now to the highest, which is the fourth degree, called *Asherum*.

This is the state of the *Sannyasi*, who has reached perfect saintship by regular degrees, according to the precepts of the Holy Books. It is the sacred cast of Brahmins, especially, to whom these precepts are given. The *Yogi* is a voluntary or amateur saint. He does not confine himself to any prescribed form, but exercises his own genius and fancy in the adoption or invention of such modes of self-torture, as will best satisfy his enthusiastic aspirations after holiness, or give him most eclat among the multitudes to whom he exhibits his feats of saintly endurance.

The ancient Greeks called both Sannyasis and Yogis by the general name of Gymnosophists. But the Brahmin Sannyasi does not wander about, naked and filthy ; nor display himself to the public gaze like the mad Yogi, who treats his vile clay with all possible contempt as the prison of his soul. The Sannyasi is distinguished by a calm, silent dignity, and by his secluded manner of life in woods and solitudes, where the world sees him not.

He aims to subdue the passions by subduing the body. He has discarded all connection with family and friends. He throws off all clothing but a wrapper about his waist. With a staff in one hand, and a pitcher in the other, he hies to the desert, never to return. Fasting and miserable he is absorbed in contemplations of the Deity, and never speaks except to pronounce the mysterious word Awan, which is the commencement of the Vedas. His food is wild fruits, his drink water. The business of his life is mental prayer and intense contemplation, by which his soul is abstracted from material things, and so united to the Deity as to endue him with a degree of divine power. He exercises an energy that is felt through the universe. By means of this divine energy he can call down the stars, and raise demons from the lowest hell.*

The Sannyasis believe that they could even disembody the soul, and taking an ethereal flight as pure spirits, could return again at pleasure to the body. When we consider the enthusiasm of these men, and their habits of intense contemplation, we are not surprised that they should take a fit of mental abstraction, in which the body and all visible things around them were forgotten, for an actual flight of the soul into the regions whose imaginary scenes were conceived with the vividness of reality.

Father Bouchet in the *Lettres Edificantes et Curieuses*, tells a remarkable story founded on this notion.

An ancient Indian prince, who possessed the power of volun-

* This notion of the miraculous power acquired by means of extraordinary mortification of the body and exercises of devotion, came with Monachism into the Christian church. Every great monkish saint became a miracle-worker.

tary metempsychosis, used, when he took his voyages through the heavens, to leave his body in the care of a servant. The servant, by close observation, at last was able to learn the form of prayer, called Mandiran, by which his master disengaged his soul from his body. He soon took advantage of this discovery. The next time that his master took a flight, he disengaged his soul from his own body, and transferred it to that of his master. To prevent a dangerous use of his forsaken body by the soul of his master on his return, he cut off the head and carried it away. Thus secured, he took possession of the prince's throne and bed; no one being able to detect the imposture.

When the hapless spirit returned and perceived how he had been defrauded of his throne and his queen, he retired full of grief and dismay to a grove, which he filled with his desolate wailings. The goddess of his former devotion, probably Bhavani, the Indian Venus, took compassion on him, as the story has it, though it was an ill-judged compassion, and prepared him the beautiful body of a parrot, in which he flew away to court, where to his sorrow and vexation he beheld his servant in possession of his rights and of his lovely queen. The hapless bird flew about through the palace, until he was caught by a servant and presented to the queen, who admired his splendid plumage and kept him in her chamber. This only aggravated his sufferings; for now he was imprisoned where he had to behold the caresses bestowed by the queen upon his treacherous slave, and all the mortifying circumstances of his irremediable loss.

The secret was not discovered till some ages afterwards, when a Sannyasi, who, by the power of absorption, could penetrate into the past, the present and the future,* revealed it as a warning to the sovereigns of India, not to trust implicitly to their servants.

The Sannyasi, when at his devotions, beholds all the alluring and all the appalling objects of nature with unmoved indifference

* This wonderful power of penetration, acquired by the Hindoo Sannyasis, was also attained in later ages by some Christian Sannyasis, or monks of the highest order of sanctity.

His soul is fixed on the supreme Brahm. He sacrifices every human feeling to devotion. The pouring rains of the tropic, and the freezing snows of the Himmalayah are alike unfelt, when they beat upon the anchorite's naked body. Emaciated with hunger, he is not tempted by delicate viands. Sweet odors, and sweet sounds of earth, yield him no pleasure. Voluptuous nymphs may display their wanton attitudes before him, without exciting the slightest desire in his heart. His soul has become insensible to all earthly delights and sufferings. Corporeal sensations affect not his soul, he has mortified his flesh till it can feel no more ; and his soul can now soar undisturbed to the celestial regions, and bathe in the essence of Deity. Insensible of change, abstracted from material things, and immersed in the Divine infinitude, it has reached the summit of spiritual sanctification, and awaits only its final release from its clay prison, to ascend to the regions of bliss, where it has heretofore dwelt in contemplation. There it will bathe its ethereal essence in uncreated light, until it is finally absorbed in the Divine source of all being. This is the Hindoo's idea of supreme felicity.

After having gone through the four degrees of penance, the Sannyasi sometimes resolves to burn himself as a sacrifice to the Deity. This is permitted by the Holy Books, and is deemed highly meritorious in a Sannyasi. The sacrifice is made with great pomp and ceremony.

Many drown themselves, or are drowned by their friends, in the purifying waters of the Ganges.*

Ward says that there are no such ascetics now as those above described, if there ever were such. At present there may be no Sannyasis in the woods and deserts of India ; but we shall produce evidence hereafter, that they did exist in ancient times.

* The foregoing account of the degrees of Hindoo saintship, is taken chiefly from Maurice's Indian Antiquities, Chapters 3 & 5 of vol. iii. On the Hindoo religion, his chief authority is the Ayeen Akbery, one of the holy books.

We add some further particulars from Ward,* respecting the Hindoo religion.

The Hindoo Shasters teach what the Christian Scriptures do not—that is, *certain rites for the repose of the soul after death.*

The soul after death takes a little body not larger than one's thumb, and remains in the custody of Yumu, judge of the dead. When the time of punishment arrives, this little body is enlarged and made capable of enduring torments.

The performance of a ceremony called Shradhu, delivers the deceased sufferer at the end of one year, and transfers him to heaven, where he receives the reward of his meritorious actions, and afterwards transmigrates to another body, of the sort for which the general character of his former life has fitted him. Without the Shradhu the deceased remains in his suffering state, and cannot transmigrate until the term of his punishment is fulfilled.†

The ceremonies of the Shradhu begin on the eleventh day after the decease; are continued monthly, and concluded at the expiration of a year. The service consists of offerings and prayers for the dead, with certain prescribed forms and ceremonies.

Hence it appears that the notion of purgatorial torments after death, and of shortening their duration by prayers and offerings for the dead, was not an invention of the Christian Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, but was borrowed, like most other corruptions of Christianity, from the heathen nations of antiquity. The most important of them originated in the East Indies and in Egypt. How they came thence into the Church, we shall attempt to show in some following chapters.

In the ancient Hindoo books we find also the doctrine of ceremonial uncleanness by contact with certain persons or things

* Ward's View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos, vol. ii. book iv. ch. 2.

† If the reader will pay attention as he proceeds, he will be surprised to find nearly all the Roman Catholic superstitions among the more ancient idolaters of Eastern Asia.

deemed unclean, and by the occurrence of certain states of the body, by which it was supposed to be defiled. An unclean person could not partake of any religious worship or ceremony, until he was duly purified in the manner prescribed by the holy books.

The ancient common law of the Hindoos also designated a multitude of offences, for which the offender was bound to make atonement. Some of the designated offences were violations of common morality ; others were founded on the distinction of cast, and on superstitious notions and doctrines of religion taught in the sacred books, such as killing an insect or a cow, eating onions, &c. The atonements were various, such as paying fines, restitution of property gotten by theft or fraud, religious offerings, voluntary mortifications of the body, penitential prayers, and repetitions of the name of God, &c. The ancient Hindoo penances were therefore similar in principle and in practice to those prescribed to penitents now by the Roman Catholic priests. The penalty of omitting to perform these penances was also the same, namely, punishment in a purgatorial hell, with the addition among the Hindoos, of transmigration into the body of some noxious animal or miserable man. For example he who kills an animal by strangling, or laughs at a Puranah at the time of its recital, will, after enduring infernal torments, be born a snake, then a tiger, then a cow, a white heron, a crow, and a man having the asthma.

The Ugnee Purana assigns to those evil men who lose human birth, eight millions of inferior births before they can become men again. They are to pass through millions of states of minerals and vegetables ; then they gradually ascend through fishes, insects, birds and beasts to the dignity of men again.*

As our works on Christian theology agree in fundamentals, but differ more or less in details ; so do the Hindoo Puranahs ; which being works of the Hindoo fathers, expound in different ways the fundamental doctrines of the Vedas. In this Puranah we find the doctrine that every being, minerals not excepted, has a soul.

* Ward's View, book v. ch. 1.

In this as in many other particulars, the ancient Egyptian philosophy agreed with that of the Hindoos.

A consequence of this doctrine of transmigration is, that the Hindoos consider the sufferings of the present life as punishments for sins committed in a prior state. Hence, when they become diseased, many of them sit down in despair, supposing human remedies to be vain for an evil sent by divine justice.

§ 3. *Of the Future Judgment, Heaven and Hell.*

The doctrine of *judgment after death* is taught in the Pudnu Puranah after this manner.*

Yumu is judge of the dead. He dwells on a floating island at the southern extremity of the earth. The meritorious are led to his seat by a delightful road. On the way they are entertained with the songs and dances of the heavenly courtesans, and with choral hymns chanted by inferior Gods in praise of the superior. At intervals are houses of refreshment, where cool fountains play, and delicious viands are set out for their entertainment. Along the road-side limpid waters are adorned with lilies, and tall trees, embowering the ways, drop showers of odorous blossoms along their path. The road is frequented by heavenly beings marching in splendid processions, accompanied by bands of singers, who make the woods and waters vocal with their hymns of praise and of gladness. Such are the entertainments of the saints on their way to the judgment seat.

The wicked have on the contrary a long and painful journey to undergo.

Sometimes they have to travel over burning pavements;—then to wade through hot embers or scorching sands;—then to tread over beds of glowing sharp-edged gravel. Now and then showers of cutting and piercing instruments, or of red-hot cinders, or of scalding rain, pour down upon them. Hot winds blister their skins and scorch their lungs. They drop into dark wells, or stumble through gloomy passages over rough stones, amongst

* Ward; book v. ch. 2.

which serpents crawl and nestle. Another while, they must force their way through a dense thicket of spiny shrubs ; and then again over heaps of gory clods, rotten bones and putrifying flesh, alternating with piles of thorns and iron burs. They meet tigers, jackals, wild elephants, terrible giants, and other fearful monsters. They travel naked, with disheveled hair, parched lips and throats, covered with blood and dirt ; wailing and shrieking as they go, with faces of horror and despair. Sometimes they are dragged along by thongs tied round their wrists, or fastened by holes in their noses or heels, or knotted in their hair. Sometimes they are dragged along with head and heels tied together. When at last they arrive, they behold Yumu clothed with terror. He is two hundred and forty miles high : His eyes are like two fiery lakes : Rays of dazzling splendor shoot from his body : A flame issues from his mouth : The sound of his breathing is like the roar of a tempest. In his right hand he grasps an iron club ; and when he utters the sentence of punishment, his voice is like the thunder that dissolves the universe. Then having re-proved them for their crimes, he drives them with his club to the different hells to which they are condemned.

Future Happiness,* is, according to the Puranahs, of four degrees : 1st. That enjoyed in the heaven of the inferior gods : 2d. Deification, by which a saint becomes a Deutah or inferior god : † 3d. Dwelling in the highest heavens among the superior gods ; and 4th. Absorption in the universal spirit of Brahm.

The descriptions of heaven in the Puranahs are in the oriental style ; full of gold and precious stones, cool waters, shady bowers of bloom, and images of sensual delight.

The meritorious works that carry a man to heaven, are chiefly such as profit the Brahmins on the earth—says Ward ;—such as ceremonial observances, some of which, as exhibited in the temples, are unmentionably obscene. This statement is true, so far as it goes. But missionaries who write of the religion and of the

* Ward ; book v. ch. 3. † Like the Roman Catholic saint-gods.

priests that they are laboring to overthrow, can seldom represent them impartially. The Hindoo superstition is bad enough, when justly considered; but Ward should have in this place remembered the ascetic mortifications of the Brahmins. If they impose on others for their own benefit, they also punish themselves severely by their monkish austerities.

As to *Absorption*, the highest state of Hindoo felicity; it is considered as the only state which secures the soul against farther transmigration; because the soul then ceases to have a separate or individual existence. It is lost in the universal spirit of Brahm; and like him, or as a reunited portion of him, enjoys eternal sleep without ideas or consciousness.

In a sacred book entitled Bhagavat Gheeta, Krishnu—that is Vishnu under another name—praises the man “who forsaketh every desire of his heart, is happy within himself, without affection, indifferent to good or evil, to whom pleasure and pain, gold, iron, and stones, are alike.” The person whose very nature, as they say, is absorbed in divine meditation,—whose life resembles a sweet sleep, unconscious and undisturbed;—who desires nothing, not even God, and who is thus changed into the image of the ever-blessed, obtains absorption into Brahm.

There are, however, some followers of Vishnu, who do not seek absorption, but a conscious happiness with him.

The practices leading to absorption, have been already mentioned—such as retiring from the world, seclusion in a forest, fasting, prayer, undivided contemplation, &c.

The ascetics did not always succeed in killing their passions, for the Puranahs relate many instances to the contrary. Vashisthu, one of these saints, inflicted on himself incredible severities; yet in the midst of his devotions, (says the Mahabharatu,) he fell in love with one of the heavenly courtezans, and lived with her five thousand years. Purasheru, an ascetic, violated the daughter of another ascetic, while she was ferrying him over a river. From this act sprang the famous Vyasu, author of the Mahabharat. Other instances are related of their committing acts of rage and

violence. Brigu, for example, kicked the god Vishnu on the breast. Javalee, an ascetic, stands charged with stealing cow's flesh at a sacrifice, and when search was made for the beef, changing it into onions, to avoid detection. Hence onions are forbidden food to the Hindoos.

Future Punishments are described in a book called the Shree-Chaga-vutu. There are various hells for the punishment of different classes of transgressors. The following sketches of a few will suffice.

Adulterers, thieves, &c., are to be cast into the hell Tamisru, and continually famished and beaten. Defrauders are to be put into a hell of darkness; gluttons are to be cast into a hell of boiling oil. Contemners of the Vedas and of the Brahmins are to be plunged into a hell of burning metal, for three and a half millions of years. He who injures a man of superior order is to be torn by swine. The unmerciful are to be tormented in a hell of snakes, flies, lice, and other vermin. A Brahmin or king who drinks spirits, is to be cast into pans of liquid fire. He who despises a religious devotee, shall stick fast in mud, with his head downwards. He who causes sorrow to others, is to be bitten by snakes with five heads, &c.*

From these specimens the reader can judge of the Hindoo notions of retributive justice, and of the comparative demerit of crimes. As the Hindoos had no idea of eternal punishment, they considered those of all the hells as purgatorial.

We have now put the reader in possession of so much of the Hindoo system of religion, as will enable him to understand the grounds on which the Yogis and Sannyasis practice those ascetical austerities, which have struck the attention of foreigners for more than two thousand years past. If we examine this system philosophically, we shall discover that the whole resolves itself into the following fundamental principles:

* Ward; book V. ch. 4.

1. Matter and spirit are essentially distinct and incompatible substances.

2. Matter is essentially evil and impure ; spirit is essentially good and pure ; but capable of defilement from contact with material bodies.

3. All spiritual beings, from the highest to the lowest, are emanations or individualized portions of the eternal and universal spirit called Brahm, which has no personal properties, no action nor consciousness, but is the essence of all beings that have them.

4. Individual spirits become souls by assuming material bodies ; and every such body is endued with a soul, which may transmigrate from one body to another.

5. By inhabiting an animated body, the soul is subjected, more or less, to the impure desires and passions generated by material objects, operating upon the soul through the bodily senses. Thus the soul contracts impurities ; it is debased by earthly affections, and the spiritual repose which constitutes its true happiness, is destroyed by the agitation of its corporeal desires and passions.

6. All true happiness consists in a calm, unchanging repose of the spirit.

7. To attain this state of blessed repose, the soul in the flesh must purify itself, and atone for its offences, by mortifying the corporeal senses, subduing the desires which disturb it, and dwelling in fixed contemplation of the divine essence from which its being is derived, and in which alone it can find a pure and undisturbed repose.

These principles can be further reduced to two, which run through the theory and practice of the whole system.

1. Matter is essentially evil.

2. The happiness of the soul consists in repose, or exemption from all the affections and passions that spring from matter, and disturb the repose of the soul.

Hence to reduce the body to insensibility by suffering, and thus to deliver the soul from its influence, is the Hindoo way of sancti-

fication. All that is done for this end is meritorious, purges the soul from sin, and procures the favor of the gods.

§ 4. *Practices of the Hindoo Devotees, as observed by Foreigners in all ages.*

Let us now see how the ascetic doctrines of the ancient Hindoo books have been carried out in practice, both in ancient and in modern times.

The earliest accounts by foreigners have come down to us from the Greeks.

When Alexander the Great, three hundred and thirty years before Christ, conquered the western parts of the country called India, from the river Indus, he found several sorts of monkish ascetics there. Some Greek scholars who accompanied his army, or who conversed afterwards with persons who had been in the country, wrote accounts of the wonderful things seen in that distant region, of which the Greeks had previously heard nothing but vague reports. Some things which these writers related from hearsay, were certainly fabulous; but they gave unquestionably true accounts of the Hindoo monks, whom they called *Gymnosophists* or *Naked Philosophers*. Both the ancient Hindoo books, and the notices of travellers in later ages, fully confirm their accounts, however strangely they sounded in Grecian ears.

From these writers of Alexander's time, whose works are now lost, Strabo, the Greek geographer, about three hundred years later, compiled the account which we shall quote pretty fully from his pages. We have to remark, however, that the Greeks never penetrated as far as the valley of the Ganges, where the Hindoo religion originated, and where its institutions flourished in their highest perfection. Their accounts are, therefore, less full and satisfactory, than otherwise they might have been. Yet they are substantially accurate, and highly interesting from their antiquity. Few modern travellers have taken such intelligent views of these Naked Philosophers.

The Greek writers dignified these oriental monks with the title

of philosophers, as they did every class of men who professed to live by rule. So did the Greek Fathers of the Church many ages afterwards call Christian monachism by the honorable name of philosophy.

But we now proceed to give the substance of what Strabo relates from preceding writers concerning the Hindoo monks.*

“Megasthenes says that there are two sects of Indian philosophers, the Brachmans† and the Garmans. The Brachmans live in the woods not far from cities. Their manner of life is simple. They sleep on straw or skins, use no animal food and abstain from women. They attend to serious instructions, and impart them to such as desire to hear. But the hearers, while the speaker is addressing them, must not speak, nor hawk, nor spit. When they have lived thirty-seven years from boyhood as anchorites, they return to their possessions, live pleasantly, dress well, and, if they choose, marry wives, that they may rear children for the same mode of life.”

“Aristobulus, another writer, says that he saw two Brachmans; the elder had his head shaven, but the younger wore his hair. Both were followed by disciples. They spent a part of their time in the market-places, where, on account of the esteem in which they were held for their counsels, they received plentiful gifts of oil, honey, and corn. When they came to Alexander they ate dinner, standing at his table; and to give a specimen of their patience, they withdrew to a neighboring place, where the one lay upon his back and exposed himself to the sun and the rain. The other stood upon one leg, holding in each hand a billet of wood three cubits long. When he got tired, he stood upon the other leg; and so he continued the whole day. This one said that he intended to persevere in his ascetic life during forty years.”

“Onesicritus says that he was sent by Alexander to visit some of these philosophers who went naked, as he had heard, and were much respected. He found them two or three miles from the city. Each was naked, motionless in one position, sitting or lying

* Strabo, Book xv., ch. 1.

† Brahmins.

the whole day exposed to the sun, though it was too hot for others to bear."

Such, according to the authors quoted by Strabo, were the Brachmans, or Naked Philosophers. We easily recognize in them the Sannyasis of the Hindoo books.

Of the Garmans, or, as others call them, Sarmans or Samaneans, the more respectable sort were called by the Greeks Hylobioi, or Woods-philosophers, because they lived in the woods upon plants and wild fruits, and had no clothing but leaves of trees. They also abstained from women and wine.

Next in respectability to the Woods-philosophers were the Physicians. These were simple but not wild in their manner of life. They fed on rice and cornmeal, which was freely given them. They were hospitably entertained in the houses of the people; *for they could make women bear many children, and male or female, just as they pleased, with their medicines.** Both these sorts of Garmans exercised themselves in voluntary pains and sufferings. They would continue the whole day motionless in one posture.

But there were others who practised soothsaying and charms, and were skilled in the use of incantations for the dying. These went about the villages and cities begging. Some were more decent in person and manners than the rest. These like the others preached about hell; but in a way to promote religion and virtue. Some carried women along to philosophize with them, but they had no sexual intercourse.

Such is Strabo's account of the Hindoo ascetics or monks, taken from writers who lived about six hundred years before monachism appeared in the Christian Church. They agreed in every essential particular with the Christian monks of the fourth century. They professed abstinence from women and wine.

* Some of the Christian monks even as early as the fourth century, and many of them in the fifth century, as the Fathers tell us, had this same gift of making barren women fruitful. Many longing wives resorted to them for this purpose. But it does not appear that the holy men used any artificial medicines.

They rejected all pleasant food, and lived abstemiously on the spontaneous products of nature. They wore little clothing, and lay on the ground. Most of them lived in solitude, exercising themselves in patient suffering and silent devotion.

But some of the sects mentioned by Strabo were composed chiefly of roguish impostors, who practiced beggary and quackery,—who debauched credulous women, and plundered both men and women under hypocritical pretences of devotion, and knavish pretences of medical skill and magical power.

After the time of Strabo, the Greeks acquired little additional knowledge of the Hindoo philosophy. About two hundred years later, Clement of Alexandria, a Platonic Christian writer, speaks of the same two classes of ascetics. In his *Stromata*, Book I., he says, there are two kinds of Indian philosophers, the Sarmans and the Brachmans. Of the former some are called Allobioi, who inhabit no cities nor houses. They are clothed with the bark of trees, eat acorns and wild berries, and drink water with their hands. They know nothing of marriage, nor of the procreation of children.

In the third book of the same work, Clement says,—“Many Brachmans, eat no living creature and drink no wine. Some of them take food daily, some only every third day. But they set no value on life, and despise death, believing it to be a regeneration. Those of the Indians called Semnoi—that is, venerable—go naked all their lives. They exercise truth, predict the future, and worship a certain pyramid under which they believe the bones of a certain god to repose. But neither the Gymnosophists nor those called Semnoi use women, thinking this to be unnatural and iniquitous. Hence they keep themselves chaste. They have also virgins called Semnai. They appear also to observe celestial phenomena, and from them to predict certain future events.”—So far Clement.

The term Semnoi which he uses, is a Greek word signifying venerable. He evidently confounds this word with the name Samanæi or Sarmanæ, which are but other forms of the name

Garmanæ, which Strabo applies to the second class of Indian ascetics. The mention of the monumental pyramid, or tomb of a god, worshipped by the Samaneans, indicates that these were Boodhists, of whom we shall give an account in the next chapter.

The Greek philosopher Porphyry flourished in the third century, about sixty years after Clement. He says that the Brachmans live, some in the mountains, and some on the banks of the Ganges : the former eat fruits, milk, and herbs ; the latter fruits and rice. —Palladius and Ambrose, two Christian Fathers of the fourth century, say, that they undergo the severest philosophical exercises, study frugality and piety, sing hymns to God, contemn transient things, and renounce all the pleasures and conveniences of life.

The other sect are called Samanaei by Porphyry, Garmans by Strabo, and Sarmans by others, as already mentioned. Bardesanes relates that persons admitted into their community, renounced their worldly goods, left their wives and children, if they had any, to the care of others, shaved all the hair from their bodies, and wore a monastic gown. They lived without the city in houses and temples. They had stewards who provided for their wants. At the ringing of bells they assembled in the house for prayer; after which each had his dish of rice given to him, with the addition, if he desired it, of some herbs and fruits.

This description applies to the modern system of Cenobite monachism among the Boodhists of Eastern Asia, and seems to demonstrate, both that the Samaneans were Boodhists, and that their monastic system existed before the time of Bardesanes, about the year 172 of the Christian era. But it should be observed, that Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian, who lived a few years before Christ, relates in his second book substantially the same thing of the Brachmans. If he did not err in applying it to them, as he probably did, then it would appear that the Brachmans had also, at that early period, a regular system of cenobite monachism. But as neither the Hindoo books, nor any

other ancient or modern writer recognises such a system as existing among them, the reasonable conclusion seems to be, that Diodorus ascribed to the one sect what properly belonged, even in his time, to the other.

We come now to the reports of travellers who have visited India since the Christian era. The earliest of these on record are the travels of two Mahometans of Western Asia, probably Arabia. They were translated from the Arabic by Renaudot, and may be found in the seventh volume of Pinkerton's Collection of Voyages and Travels.

The earlier of these travellers visited India about the year of our Lord 850. He gives the following graphic sketch of the Hindoo ascetics.

“There are in the Indies men who profess to live in the woods and mountains, and to despise what other men most value. They abstain from everything but such wild herbs and fruits as grow in the woods. They put iron buckles on their privy parts to preserve their chastity. Some of them are quite naked, or have only a leopard's skin thrown over them. In this plight they keep standing with their faces towards the sun. I formerly saw one in this posture; and when, sixteen years afterwards, I returned to the Indies, I found him still in the same posture, and was astonished that his eyes had not been put out by the sun's heat.”

Here we find unchanged the naked philosophers of Alexander's time, nearly twelve centuries before.

About the year 1280, Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, found them still unchanged. Speaking of the Hindoo Brahmins (the Brachmans of Strabo) he says: “They are of great abstinence and long life. There are some devotees among them, called Tangui, who go altogether naked, live austere and rub their bodies with an ointment made of burnt ox-bones. They neither kill nor eat any living creature, nor any herb or root until it is dried, esteeming everything to have a soul. They use no dishes, but lay their victuals on dry leaves, &c.”

After the Mahometans conquered Hindostan, the fanaticism of the conquerors seems to have infused itself into their Hindoo subjects, and to have incited them to a wilder and more savage fanaticism than formerly ; as the following accounts of modern travellers will show. Besides the Yogis, who are a purely Hindoo sect, we read of a class of religious savages called Fakirs or poor men, who are partly Mahometans and partly of the Hindoo religion.

Bernier, a French traveller, about the year 1670, thus describes them :

“ Amongst the great variety of Fakirs, &c., of the Indies, there is abundance of them that have convents, wherein they maintain vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience,* leading so odd a life, that I doubt whether you can give credit to it. These are commonly called Jaguis, (Yogis) as if you should say, *united to God*. You shall see many of them sit stark naked, or lie days and nights upon ashes, and commonly enough under those large trees that are about the water-tanks, or else in the galleries that are about their idol temples. Some of them have their hair hanging down to the middle of their legs, and that wreathed into several parcels, like those who have the disease called in Poland the plica. Of these I have seen some who held one arm or both perpetually above their heads, and that had at the ends of their fingers wreathed nails, that were longer by measure than the half of my little finger. Their arms were small and lean, as of hectic persons, because they took not sufficient nourishment, in that forced posture, and they could not let them down to take anything with them ; wherefore, also, they have young novices, who serve them, as holy men, with great respect. There is no Megara in hell so terrible to look upon as these men are, all naked, with their black skin, long hair, dried arms in the posture before mentioned, and with long crooked nails.”

“ I have often met in the fields whole squadrons of these Fakirs, altogether naked, dreadful to behold. Some held their

* These are the three vows made by the Roman Catholic monks.

arms lifted up in the posture before mentioned ; others had their terrible hair hanging about them, or else they had wreathed it about their heads ; some had a kind of Hercules club in their hands ; others had dry and stiff tiger skins over their shoulders. I saw them pass thus quite naked, without any shame, through the midst of a great borough. I admired how men, women, and children, could look upon them so indifferently, and how *the women brought them alms with much devotion, taking them for very holy men, much wiser and better than others.*"

On the top of a mountain in Cashmire, in the north of India, Bernier saw an old hermit, "whose religion was not known, though it was said that he did miracles, caused strange thunders when he would, and raised storms of hail, snow, rain, and wind. He looked somewhat savage-like, having a long and large white beard, uncombed. He asked alms somewhat fiercely ; suffered us to take up earthen cups of water which he had ranged on a great stone ; made a sign with his hand that we should speedily march away ; and grumbled at those who made a noise ; because, said he, (when I had come into his cave, and softened him by humbly putting a rupee into his hand,) a noise raiseth furious storms and tempests."

Hamilton, in his account of the East Indies, dated about the year 1700, says—"There is another sort of Banians called Yougies, (Yogis) who practice great austerities and mortifications. They condemn worldly riches, and go naked, except a bit of cloth about their loins ; and some deny themselves even that, *delighting in nastiness and a holy obscenity*, with a great show of sanctity. They never cut nor comb their hair ; but besmear their bodies and faces with ashes, which makes them look more like devils than men. I have seen a sanctified rascal of seven feet high, with a large turband of his hair wreathed about his head, and his body bedaubed with ashes and water, sitting quite naked under the shade of a tree, with a gold ring through his prepuce. *This fellow was much revered by young married women, who prostrating themselves, &c.*"

Papi, a later traveller,* thus describes a Fakir:—"Picture to yourself a fanatical madman, whose face and whole body, which is naked except a small wrapper about the privy parts, is thickly besprinkled with a white powder—whose tangled hair, never touched by a comb, stands out in a hundred bushy tufts, like the snake's on Megara's head, who from time to time bellows frightfully, who behaves like one possessed by the devil, walks with long hasty strides, setting all shame and decency at defiance, his fiery eyes rolling fearfully in his head; and you will see in the person of this disgusting, filthy madman, the lively image of a Fakir. I frequently saw them lying on their backs in the open street, perfectly motionless with their eyes closed, when the sun shone with a scorching heat, and the sand under them was burning hot. In this position they would hum through the teeth a sacred hymn, and pretend that they were so absorbed in heavenly contemplations, that they did not notice the passers by; yet, for all that, they kept glancing round to see whether some one was not throwing them a gift."

It is related of the Indian Emperor Aurengzebe, that he once invited the Fakirs of southern India to his court, because he had heard that they kept gold and jewels sewed up in their ragged garments. When they came, he gave them a royal feast in his palace; and, after the feast, ordered a new suit of clothes to be brought forth for each of them, which he then presented to them with these words: "It is just and meet that men so entirely devoted as you are to the service of God, should be better clothed. Therefore lay aside these ragged garments, and take, each of you, one of these new suits. In vain did the frightened Fakirs make all sorts of objections. They had to make the exchange, and went away grievously dissatisfied with the discovery of their hypocrisy, and the loss of their treasures.

Niebuhr, the celebrated traveller, says—"The Musselmans (Mahometans) of Surat, in India, have among them a great many Fakirs of their own religion, who are the most insolent beggars in

* Quoted by Bohlen, *Das. Alte Indien*. Ch. 2.

the world." Again he says of the Hindoos: "They have two orders of Fakirs among them, the Bargais and the Gusseins, who travel about armed, in troops of some thousands. These orders are sworn enemies, and wherever they meet, fierce combats ensue. The stories of the ridiculous penances of the Fakirs are well known. Their fanaticism has not yet become cold. There died lately at Surat, one of these madmen, who had lived shut up in a cage for twenty years, with his arms constantly raised above his head."

Those dangerous fanatics who go about in troops, always create alarm when they approach a town. The men fly, *but the women generally welcome their coming, expecting a blessing from the private visits and prayers of these holy men.* When a pilgrim of this sort enters a house, in the absence of the husband, he leaves his staff or his sandals at the door, to warn the good man, if he should happen to arrive, that the saint is engaged in private prayer with his wife. Seeing this sign, he takes care not to enter, knowing that if he did, he would get a good beating for his impious intrusion.*

Frequent mention is made of the long filthy hair of these fanatics. Dr. Fryer, in the seventeenth century, saw at Surat a Yogi whose hair was four yards long, and trailed upon the ground. This confirms a remark of Ward, that the Yogi's lengthen the natural growth of their hair by artificial additions, which they could easily combine with their uncombed, clotted, and inextricably-tangled locks.

The reader has seen what the Hindoo books say of the Sanyasi's purgatory of five fires. We find in Maurice's Indian Antiquities, a modern instance of this. It is a proof not only that the ancient rules of Hindoo ascetism are yet practiced to some extent, but that human nature can, under the influence of fanaticism, endure voluntarily, the most intolerable sufferings.

A Yogi resolved for forty days to endure the purgatory of five

* Picard. Ceremonies et Coutumes Religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde. Tome 1, Religion des Brahmes.

fires, the blazing sun being one of the five. This solemn act was to take place *during a public festival, before an innumerable crowd of spectators.* He seated himself early in the morning on a quadrangular stage, with three ascents to it. He fell prostrate and thus continued his devotion until the sun grew hot. He then rose, stood upon one leg, and fixed his eyes steadfastly upon the sun. Four fires, each large enough to roast an ox, were then built at the corners of the stage, the devotee counting his beads the while, like a Roman Catholic penitent. After increasing the heat of the fires by putting incense into them, he bent down with his eyes still on the sun, and stood on his head during three hours. He then sat cross-legged the rest of the day, roasting between the fires, and bathed in the exudations of his own grease. So he did, or was to do, continually, until the forty days were expired.

Fryer saw others who had vowed to keep a standing posture for sixteen years. One had fulfilled his term. The legs of all were dreadfully swollen and ulcerated.

Sonnerat says, that some stand on the toes of one foot, the other foot being lifted up, and both arms elevated, in the midst of four fires, and with their eyes intently fixed on the solar orb.

Others (says Sonnerat) appear in public quite naked, to show that they are no longer susceptible of any passion, and have returned to the state of primeval innocence.

Sonnerat agrees with Ward in saying that the devotees are characterized by pride, self-love, and an inflated conceit of their superior sanctity. They avoid the touch of the common people and of foreigners, as a defilement. They have a sovereign contempt for all who are not sanctified like themselves.*

The class of Yogis called Tapasvinas, exercise their genius in devising strange modes of self-torture. Some bury themselves in pits with only small breathing holes at the top. Some stand buried up to the chin, with their heads only above ground. Others disdaining to touch the vile earth, have themselves sus-

* Maurice's Indian Antiquities, as before referred to.

pended in cages from the boughs of trees. Some condemn themselves to imprisonment for life in iron cages, with some painful contortion of the body annexed. Purchas relates on the authority of the Jesuit missionaries, that one of them had his body enclosed in an iron cage, with his head and feet outside, so that he could walk, but neither sit nor lie down. At night his pious attendants attached a hundred lighted lamps to the outside of the cage, so that their master could exhibit himself *walking as the light of the world.*”* Some instead of cages wear heavy iron collars or fetters, like certain Christian saints in the fifth century. Some give an expressive sign of their chastity, by dragging a heavy chain fastened by one end round their privy parts. Others keep their fists hard shut, until their finger nails grow through the palms of their hands. Others support their arms above their heads by grasping the branch of a tree, and there they stand motionless, until their arms stiffen and dry up, like dead tree limbs. Others stand perpetually on one leg, only at night supporting themselves in a leaning posture, by holding the end of a stretched rope. Others keep their faces turned over one shoulder, until they cannot turn them back again. Others lie on wooden beds, bristling all over with iron spikes an inch long above the wood. Others have themselves fastened for life to the body of a tree by a short chain. Others suspend themselves for half an hour at a time, feet uppermost, over a hot fire. Others have themselves suspended by a chain from the end of a long lever balanced by a pivot on the top of a post fifteen feet high, a hook at the lower end of the chain being thrust through the muscles of their naked backs ; and thus they are whirled round like a stone in a sling, by men at the other end of the lever. But it would be tedious to enumerate all the ways in which these heroes of a false sanctity torture themselves for the good of their souls, and *the applause of the spectators.* It does not appear that these mad devotees practice their feats in solitude. Their devotion must be stimulated by the presence of a crowd.

* How different from him who was truly the Light of the world !

All these ascetics profess abstinence from women, wine, and delicate food. They live on the charity of their admirers—especially the women, who will do anything for such holy men. Few of the Hindoo saints appear now to be anchorites, like the ancient Gymnosophists and woods-philosophers. They seem to have discovered that holy contemplations are aided by the presence of witnesses.

Popular applause has a wonderful influence on the human mind. The Yogi feels its invigorating power. The Christian hermit of old felt it in his secret cell, knowing that his deeds of self-denial would come to light, and that ten thousand tongues would utter his praise. We shall find instances of this in the lives of the hermits.

Alexander Von Humboldt found at Astracan, in Russia, where some Hindoos had settled, a Yogi who was described to him as having for twenty years long withstood the severe winters of that climate, naked, in the vestibule of the temple. Humboldt saw him there, sitting where he had always sat, shrivelled up and overgrown with hair like a wild beast. He sat in the open vestibule, where people could see him, *and admire!*

Devotees, after they have signalized themselves by such achievements as above described, become first-rate saints: they enjoy the reputation of being almost divine: they are nurtured in the temples as beings whose presence is holy and diffuses blessings on all around them. They are venerated whilst living, as the Roman Catholics venerate the relics of their dead saints, and attribute a miraculous virtue to them. We know not which deserves the palm of superior sense and piety,—the Hindoo or the Roman Catholic.

The Hindoos have also an order of holy virgins in their temples. They are devoted by their parents to the service of the gods. Their office is to weave garlands for the festivals, to adorn the altars and to sing and dance in honor of the gods. These holy virgins of the heathen nations, may be considered as the prototypes of the consecrated virgins of the church in the third and fourth centuries, and of *the nuns of later ages*.

CHAPTER III.

OF MONACHISM AMONG THE BOODHISTS OF EASTERN ASIA.

§ 1. *The Origin of Boodhism.*

WE mentioned in the preceding chapter that Vishnu, the second god of the Hindoo trinity, had, in a long course of ages, gone through nine incarnations, to effect some work of salvation on the earth. In the ninth he appeared as Boodh, or Budhu, as it is sometimes written. This name signifies *The Wise*, and is rather a title of honor than a proper name. He is also called Gaudama or Gotama, which is supposed to have been his proper name.

Great obscurity rests upon the history of Boodh. There are no authentic records of his life, either in Hindostan, where he lived, or among the three hundred millions of people who follow his religion in Eastern Asia. There are some old legends concerning him; but these are evidently mixed with fabulous traditions, disagreeing with one another, and, except a very few particulars, are founded on no reliable authority. The historical traditions of Ceylon, one of the primitive seats of Boodhism, say that there were several different Boodhs in divers times and places. A similar tradition exists in Burmah. It is probable, therefore, that much of the confusion and inconsistency of the legends arose from this circumstance, just as the confusion of the mythological traditions of Hercules, Bacchus, &c., among the Greeks, arose

from not properly distinguishing several personages of the same name.

The following outline of facts, embraces what learned men have generally considered, as in the main, authentic, concerning the founder of Boodhism.

At sometime between six hundred and one thousand years before Christ, a distinguished religious philosopher, whose name was Gaudama, and his title of honor Boedh, appeared on the banks of the Ganges, and was believed by the Hindoos to be an incarnation of their god Vishnu. It was afterwards reported that he was born of a virgin. His doctrine differed in some particulars from that of the Vedas, which the Brahmins taught. He gathered many followers of his new system of religion; but for some reason not easily explained—perhaps his retired mode of life, and his mild, unassuming manners—the Brahmins still paid him great respect, and regared him as an incarnation of Vishnu; though they did not embrace his peculiar doctrines—an inconsistency scarcely credible. After his death, however, his disciples incurred the enmity of the old party, and were expelled from Hindostan by a bloody persecution. They took refuge in the island of Ceylon, and in the countries north and east of Hindostan; where they propagated Boodhism with so great success, that when Europeans began, in modern times, to visit those countries, they found Boodhism prevailing in Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, Thibet, Eastern Tartary, China, and Japan. In the two last-named countries only, were the people still divided between their old religions and Boodhism.

Such is the account most generally current respecting the origin of Boodhism.

But Ward gives an entirely different view of the origin of Boodhism. He thinks it doubtful whether this was not the primary religion of Hindostan, and Brahminism a later system, raised to pre-eminence by the superior influence of the Brahmins. He says that, according to the Hindoo writings, two of the six primitive schools of Hindoo philosophy, inculcated the atheistical

doctrines concerning a First Cause, which Boodh afterwards taught.

According to the Hindoo history, about seven hundred years before Christ, Veru Vahoo of the race of Goutuma or Gaudama, a follower of one of these sects, destroyed his sovereign, and seized the throne of Delhi. This king and his three successors reigned one hundred and eight years. The last of them was Moohee Pootoo ; and as most writers agree in placing the era of Boodh in the sixth century before Christ, we may suppose him to have been the son of Moohee Pootoo, whose family name was Goutuma, one of the family names of Boodh.

In the Temoo Jetoo, a history of one of the incarnations of Boodh, he is said to have been the son of a king of Benares, and to have persevered in choosing the life of an ascetic against the will of his parents. Accounts agree that he was of royal descent, embraced an ascetic life, and adopted a system of philosophy already prevalent ; we may, therefore, suppose, (says Ward,) that he became the patron and idol of the sect already existing, and which was afterwards distinguished by his name, and supported by the reigning monarchs, who were connected with him both by agreement of opinion and by ties of blood. Thus the Boodhist philosophy predominated during a number of succeeding reigns over the religion of the Brahmins.

But the Brahmins still contended earnestly against the doctrines of Boodh, which they esteemed to be atheistical ; but whilst the Boodhist kings reigned, they could contend only with words. But three hundred years before the Christian era, Dhoo-randuru dethroned Adytyu, the last of the Boodhist dynasty, and assumed the sovereignty. From this time we may date the commencement of the persecutions by which the Boodhists were finally expelled from Hindostan, about one hundred and twenty years before Christ.

The learned Burmans hold that Boodhism was introduced into their country about four hundred and fifty years after Boodh's time, which agrees with the date just given.*

* Ward's View ; book vi., ch. 2.

As a curious and interesting specimen of the legendary stories concerning Boodh, we shall give an abridgement of Carey's translation of the Temoo Jetoo, the Burman legend above mentioned.

In the kingdom of Kasheeku, and the city of Varanusee, (Benares,) reigned Kashee Raja, an excellent king, who had sixteen thousand wives, but no child. The people came and begged the king to supplicate for a son. The king ordered his sixteen thousand wives to feast the gods and supplicate for a son. They did so, but without effect. The Queen Chundra was perfectly versed in holy rites. The king asked her particularly to supplicate for a son. When the moon was full, she fasted; and, reflecting upon her virtuous deeds, she relied upon her perfect devotions to procure her a son. When she performed them the second time, the divine messenger determined to fulfil her desire.

Looking around for a proper person to become incarnate in her womb, he beheld Boodhu-sutwu, who had once reigned over the kingdom of Varanusee during twenty years, but after death had fallen into a hell, and been punished for the space of eighty thousand years. He was then born again in the country of Tavutingra, and at death desired to ascend to the higher heaven of the gods. The divine messenger said to him—"O thou great one! The queen of Kashee supplicateth for a son: wilt thou consent to be incarnate in her womb, that thou mayest perform meritorious works and make the people happy?"

He consented, and was conceived in the womb of Chundradevu. At the same time five hundred sons of the gods were conceived by the wives of the nobility. All were born on the same day.

The king was delighted at the birth of his son, and of the five hundred sons of the nobility. He selected faultless nurses for the prince. [He had need to be particular on this point, for the legend says,]

"If an infant sit upon the lap of a very tall woman, to draw the breast, its neck grows long; if on the lap of a short woman,

it grows hump-backed ; if the woman be lean, her thighs injure it ; if very fat, it straddles or staggers when it walks ; if the woman's breasts be very long, they flatten its nose ; if she be very black, her milk is cold ; if asthmatic, it is sour ; if she has a goitre, it is bitter. Therefore rejecting all faulty nurses, he gave the child four times sixty *small-breasted, honey-like-milk-producing* nurses."

When the child was named, the king summoned the prognosticating Brahmins to declare its destiny. They examined its marks and found every sign propitious. The king was pleased, and proceeded to name the child.

When the young prince was a month old, he was brought before the king. It happened that four thieves were at the same time brought in to receive sentence. The king ordered cruel punishments to be inflicted upon them. The child was filled with horror and dread at his father's cruelty. He remembered his former sufferings in hell, and expected to be cast into hell again for his father's sins. He resolved, therefore, to adopt forthwith a system of ascetic austerities. By fasting he made his body feeble and lame. He affected to be deaf and dumb and idiotic. As he grew up, they vainly endeavored to excite his desires by tempting fruits and all sorts of pleasant things. They endeavored also to excite his faculties by frightening him : but it was all in vain.

The soothsaying Brahmins were called in a second time ; and now declared that the prince's condition foreboded evil to his parents and to the kingdom. By their advice, therefore, the king resolved to send him "in the unfortunate carriage through the unfortunate gate" to the burial-ground, and there have him interred alive. But through a mistake, resulting from the merit of Boodh's austerities, "the fortunate horses were put into the fortunate carriage," and thus the young prince—now sixteen years old—was conducted to a distant forest. Here Boodh assumed more than mortal strength : he slung the carriage whirling through the air : he possessed strength enough to go eight hun-

dred miles in a day. The god's arrayed him in a divine dress, and adorned him with such beauty, that when he addressed the charioteer, who was digging the grave, to bury the poor helpless boy, he was not recognized. But the charioteer being convinced at last of his identity, besought him to return to the palace as heir of the kingdom. He refused and declared his resolution to abide in that forest, as a mendicant hermit. Then the charioteer announced his intention to follow his example. But the prince sent him to inform his royal parents of what had happened. The queen mother, when she was told of the wondrous change in her son, and his resolution to become a hermit, sent a son of the gods to the forest to provide for him accommodations suitable to his purpose. This mighty genius soon made in the forest a house of leaves and a pool of water, and caused trees to grow, which bore fruit at all seasons of the year.

Here the princely hermit took up his abode. Casting off his splendid vestments, he girded himself with a coat made of bark, and threw a leopard's skin over his shoulders. He covered his head with his long twisted hair, and laid a bamboo across his shoulders. Then taking a staff in his hand, he walked about in his woodland bower, exclaiming, This indeed is bliss ! How happy am I ! In the evening he took of the fruit of the trees, and boiling it in tasteless water, without salt or acid, he fed on this as immortal food.

The king first, and then the queen, visited Mahee (for so the prince was named) in his forest hermitage, taking with them a great retinue. Their object was to persuade him to return and inherit the kingdom. He gave them a taste of the boiled leaves which he often ate. The royal parents did not relish the diet, and expressed their astonishment, that with such food he should be so beautiful and so happy. He accounted for it by saying, "It is my serene repose that makes my countenance so beautiful. I feel no remorse for the past and no concern for the future, and I am prepared for whatsoever may happen. Therefore my countenance is so gay. The foolish, because they are anxious

about the future, and sorry for what is past, wither away like a green reed plucked up by the roots."

The king offered him all the delights of royal luxury, if he would return ;—elephants, chariots, footmen, horsemen—lovely maidens for wives, and dancing girls for amusement ; or, said he, you shall, if you choose, have them here in the forest : kings' daughters shall come, that you may have posterity by them. Then you can be a hermit-priest during the remainder of your years.

" Oh, (said Boodh in reply) a man ought from his earliest youth to perform the virtuous acts of an ascetic life. He may become a priest : that is my choice. I have seen a youth, the beloved son of anxious parents, die as soon as he could say father and mother. I have seen maidens in the bloom of youth and beauty, perish like the upturn sprout of a bamboo. Therefore, since the young die, who can confide in life ? The life of mortals shortens every night. Of what avail then is youth ? Men are continually harrassed, and continually surrounded with cares. They pass away without seeing good. Why then should you instal me in the kingdom ?"

The sovereign Kasheeku said, " O son, inform me who it is that harasses, and who agitates mankind, and what it is that passes away without profit ?"

Boodh replied, " Death harasses mankind, increasing age gathers around them. This know, O, sire, that as the thread is shortened by every flight of the weaver's shuttle, so dwindles away the life of man. As the waters of the flowing river never re-ascend, so the days of man's life never return. As the overflowing river sweeps away the trees on its margin, so do increasing age and death bear away the generations of mankind."

The king, when he heard the virtuous sayings of Boodh, became dissatisfied with human life ; and being desirous of becoming a hermit, he resolved to cause his son to go and reign in his stead. He therefore repeated his magnificent offers, and presented every allurement that he could imagine. To show his disregard of the

kingdom, Mahee replied, "O, sire, why temptest thou me with perishing wealth, dying woman, and the fading bloom of youth! O, king! What to me is love—the smile of beauty—transitory pleasure—the anxious pursuit of wealth—sons and daughters and wives—to me who am released from the bonds of iniquity? I know that *death will not forget me*. Of what use then are pleasures and riches to me? As the fall of ripe fruits is a constant evil, so to mankind death is a source of constant anxiety. Of the many people seen in the morning, a diminished number is seen at night; and when the morning comes again, still fewer of them are to be found. *Virtuous deeds ought to be practiced to-day, for who can tell but that we must die to-morrow*: the arrows of death are continually flying, nor can we possibly escape them. O, king! thieves long after riches, but I am freed from the bonds of iniquity. Return, O, king, for I desire not thy kingdom."

When they heard these sayings, the king and queen, and all their retinue, maidens and noblemen, desired to become mendicants. The king then sent a proclamation to the city,—Whoever will, let him come to my son and be a hermit-priest. The inhabitants of the city then left their merchandise and their houses open, and went out to the king, who with many of his subjects immediately embraced a forest life with Mahee. The hermitage which the genius had prepared was filled with occupants for the space of six miles.

All lived on fruits and performed the duty of ascetics. Mahee by the power of his devotions was lifted up in the air, and thence delivered virtuous and mellifluous discourses.

A neighboring king, having heard that the king of Varanusee had abandoned his kingdom, went to take possession of it. But learning from the drunken remnant of the inhabitants, how the king's son had drawn the king and the people to the forest to share his hermit life, he was so impressed, that he too went with his attendants to see; and when he heard the mellifluous words, they all embraced the same forest life. So did three other kings

in succession. The elephants and horses became wild ; the chariots decayed and fell to pieces ; the coins of the treasuries dropped neglected into the dust, and the whole concourse of the people, after accomplishing their austerities, died and went to heaven. Even the elephants and horses, having had their souls enlightened in the society of sages, were reproduced in the six abodes of the gods. Mahee closed his earthly career as Boodh, with the declaration, " I who was deaf, dumb, and lame, am declared to be a god."

Ward gives some account of what the Brahminical Puranahs say of Boodh. One Puranah says that he was born in the district of Magudhu. The Boodhu Puranah says that Boodh had sent his attendant gods to be born of noble families, but he himself entered the womb of Maya-devu. Immediately after his birth, he gave signs of divinity. At school he showed wonderful knowledge, and instructed thousands of his school-fellows. After leaving school, he took up his residence under a tree.—Next he married Gopa, a virgin of pure family, and kept eighty-four thousand concubines besides. Afterwards he fled from them all and became a Sannyasi. He practiced great austerities, and made many converts. He became so abstracted in holy contemplation, that the boys ran sticks up his nose without awakening him to consciousness.

The gods were filled with such admiration of his sanctity, that they came down and worshipped him. But a certain man came and upbraided him so loudly for his austerities, as to rouse him to reply, " O, wicked friend ! knowest thou not that I am performing Yogu,—which requires the body to be purified by austerities ? Death is better than continuance in a body so vile that meritorious actions will not proceed from it. I will subdue my evil desires."

He finally seated himself on a rock with the vow ;—" On this rock may my body, blood, and bones become dry. Though

my life depart, I will not abandon this Yogu.” The attending god, smitten with admiration at this vow, worshipped him.

Some Brahminical writers charge, that several sects arose among the Boodhists, some of whom denied the existence of any spiritual being. Other writers charge the whole sect of Boodhists with this perfect atheism. But the charge is false.

§ 2. *The Doctrines of Boodhism.*

Boodh has been generally regarded as a reformer of the religion of the Vedas. Certain it is, if the old traditions are correct, that he appeared long after the Vedas were written, and long after the religious system taught in them prevailed in Hindostan. Yet he may have adopted, as the foundation of his system, the doctrine of a pre-existing sect.

Colebrook, who is high authority in this matter, thought the religion of the Vedas to be the most ancient in Hindostan.

The fundamental difference between Boodhism and Brahminism, is in relation to a *First Cause*. According to Ward and some other late writers, the Boodhists deny the existence of an eternal God, and the creation of the world, and are therefore essentially atheists.

The following summary of their religious philosophy, is taken chiefly from Ward’s View.

Matter is eternal. Every part of nature has its own rise, tendency and destiny. The condition of men on the earth is regulated by their works of merit and demerit. Works of merit raise individuals to happiness and the world to prosperity; but the predominance of vice produces degeneracy and tends to general ruin. Men raise themselves to the dignity of gods by meritorious deeds, and the greater the merit of their works, the higher are the glory and power of their godhead after death. But not even the highest of these self-made gods has the government of the world in his hands. Four supreme but not infinite gods, have presided in succession over the celestial hosts, since time began. Gotoma or Boodh now reigns : his period is 5000 years, 2356 of

which had expired in the year of our Lord 1814; which carries us back to the year 542 before Christ for the commencement of his era. When his 5000 years have expired, another saint-god will obtain the supremacy.

The Boodhists, like the Brahminists, hold the doctrine of Metempsychosis or Transmigration of Souls, and believe in the existence of divers hells, in which the wicked are temporarily punished according to their deserts. The next lowest state of souls is that of brute animals. These are states of punishment. The next is that of man, which is a probationary state. Above this are divers ranks of deity to which human saints are exalted according to their degrees of merit. Above the earth is a succession of heavens, differing in elevation and glory. In these the different ranks of gods have their habitations. All these were once men on the earth, and raised themselves to divinity by the merit of their works on earth—like the saint-gods whom the Roman Catholics worship.

The Boodhists hold also the doctrine that absorption is the highest state of glory and felicity. Among the Hindoos absorption is conceived to be a reunion of the soul with the infinite godhead, from which it emanated. But what can the atheistical Boodhists mean by it? If there be no universal spirit, no infinite God, from whom souls originally proceeded—into what can they be absorbed? Yet do the Boodhists, as all agree, hold the same doctrine of absorption, which we described in the foregoing chapter, as being held by the Brahminical Hindoos, and as constituting in their view the highest state of felicity and the supreme object of desire. Now if the Boodhists are atheistical unbelievers in the existence of an infinite unchangeable spirit, then the absorption for which their spirits are willing to sacrifice all earthly enjoyment, is absorption into nothing; absolute annihilation is to them the state of supreme felicity and the object of supreme desire; the highest of their gods in the most glorious of their heavens are yet in a state of inferior bliss; to be perfect they must be annihilated! The Hindoo idea of absorption into

the universal spirit of Brahm, attended with the loss of individuality and consciousness, is an absurd conception of happiness ; but the doctrine of absorption into nonentity as the completion of happiness, is philosophy run mad, and so superlatively ridiculous, that Ward is staggered by it, and professes not to understand this part of the Boodhist doctrines. It is not for us who have never seen a Boodhist book, to explain what was obscure to him ; but we may signify a doubt, whether those who accuse the Boodhists of atheism be not mistaken. They have listened perhaps too readily to the accusations of their enemies, the Brahmins, and too hastily, perhaps, inferred from their doctrine of the eternity of matter and of the innate powers of nature, that they deny the existence of any spiritual being above that of a human soul exalted to divinity. We rather suspect that they are a sort of Pantheists, supposing that there is in nature itself a Divine intelligence and virtue by which all things are governed : for how else could they imagine the existence of migratory souls, a moral order and government of the universe, and an absorption of individual souls into a universal essence ? Probably they differ from the Hindoo notion of a universal, quiescent Brahm, separate from nature and unconcerned in the affairs of the world, and place the essence of Godhead in nature itself, as the animating, moving, and governing spirit of the whole.*

Dr. Buchanan says that Nirvaree or absorption means among the Burmans exemption from all misery, but by no means annihilation. Common sense dictates that such must be the true account of the Boodhist doctrine.

The divine Boodh is the chief object of worship among his followers. His relics, or reputed relics, receive as profound a veneration from the Boodhists, as those of the saints do from the Roman Catholics. A king of Pegu once gave an immense sum

* This view of the Boodhist doctrine concerning the original Godhead, is suggested by Captain Mahoney in his account of Ceylon and the Doctrines of Boodh. See Asiatick Researches, vol. vii., p. 34.

for one of Boodh's teeth. It is supposed to be an elephant's tooth.* This reminds us of the trade in relics so common in Europe during the middle ages.

Inferior gods are honored with images in Boodhist temples, and with a subordinate worship. They occupy the same place in Boodhism which the deified saints do in Romanism: only the former are more ancient than the latter;—the heathen saint-gods being the originals: the *Christian* (if we may so call them) the copies.

The Boodhists acknowledge the Hindoo Trimurti,—namely, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, and assign them honorable offices in the highest heavens, but not the supremacy ascribed to them by the Brahmins.

The orders of the priesthood, and the rites of worship vary in different countries where Boodhism has been established. We shall notice some of these variations hereafter.

Besides the doctrines concerning the gods, already mentioned, the Boodhist religion differs from the Brahminical chiefly in the following particulars:

1. The Vedas prescribe certain bloody sacrifices of animals, though in general the Hindoo religion forbids the killing of living creatures. Boodh forbade the taking of life on any occasion, and confined his followers to vegetable offerings, such as flowers and fruits of the earth.

2. Boodh abolished among his followers the old distinction of casts, to which the Hindoos still tenaciously adhere. We mentioned these casts in the preceding chapter.

3. Among the Hindoos the Brahmins are the sacred cast. They have the exclusive privilege of teaching religion, and conducting its services. This privilege being hereditary, is common to all Brahmins, who need no ordination and are all of equal rank. On the other hand the Boodhists have regular orders of priests, who differ in rank, but are taken from the people at large.

* See Carl Ritter's *Erdkunde von Asien*, vol. iv., p. 1168.

4. The Brahmins marry at discretion. When they engage in ascetic exercises, each one chooses his own time and mode of procedure. He is not bound to others by any vow, nor subject to the rule and government of any order or superior officer.

The Boodhists on the contrary have connected a regular system of monachism with the priestly office. Their monastic system bears a wonderful resemblance to that of the Roman Catholics; but as it is much the older system, we may be sure that it was not borrowed from them. But the Boodhists have not quite so many varieties of monastic orders among them. Their monks for the most part live in monasteries, are bound by vows, and are subject to rule and government. Monastic discipline is strict, and great pains are generally taken by the abbots and the older monks, to keep the younger ones out of temptation, especially from women.

The Boodhist monks are less fanatical and extravagant in their penances, than the Hindoo Yogis. They adopt in great part the same principles of ascetic severity against the body, but their practice is more sober and moderate. They depend mainly on fasting, prayer, psalmody, and the use of the whip, to keep their rebellious flesh in subjection. Like the Hindoo Sannyasis, they endeavor by intense contemplation to raise their souls above all earthly thoughts and cares, and to prepare themselves by divine meditations for the felicity of heaven. Some monks, in order to give themselves more undisturbed to these beatifying exercises, leave their monasteries, and shut themselves up as anchorites in solitary places, like the Christian anchorites of the fourth century. Dark forests and lonely mountain tops, are the favorite places of retreat for these holy day-dreamers.*

* For a general account of Boodhism, see Guignaut's French edition of Creutzer's *Religions de l'Antiquité*, book 1. ch. v., and Bohlen. *Das Alte Indien*, ch. ii. For notices of Boodhist monks, see Syme's *Embassy to Ava* ch. iv. ix. and xi. Turner's *Embassy to Thibet*, *passim*.

The moral law of Boodh is fundamentally comprised in five precepts, forbidding, first, The killing of animals ; second, Theft ; third, Adultery ; fourth, Falsehood ; and fifth, The use of spirituous liquors. These prohibitions apply to all classes of persons. Devotees who aim at sanctity, are moreover to abstain from dancing, singing, instrumental music, festivals, perfumes, elegant dresses, high seats, &c.

When a man enters the priestly office, he moreover renounces all the pursuits and customs of the world,—shuns women, lives on alms, eats nothing except at noon, possesses but three garments, a begging dish, a girdle, a razor, a needle, and a straining cloth to take insects out of the water which he drinks, lest he should kill them, contrary to law.

The monks are schoolmasters, and teach gratuitously as a work of merit. In this they differ from the generality of Christian monks—in the gratuitous part, from the whole race of them, ancient and modern. Boys of fine parts are, if the parents consent, liberally educated for the priesthood, but may choose at a certain age whether they will be priests or not. Boys of five years and upwards are admitted into the seminaries as students, and are trained to observe the five precepts, and those also which prohibit pleasures and amusements. Those who obey the rules may be ordained priests at twenty years of age. Then if they obey the law of two hundred and twenty-seven precepts, to which priests are subject, they may at the expiration of ten years be promoted to the rank of priests of the first order, who are empowered to have colleges and disciples under them.

The ordination of a priest is a very important ceremony. It requires the presence of a priest who has been twenty years in orders, and of five others who have been ordained ten years at least. Spectators are excluded from this ceremony.

Religious festivals are regulated by the moon. The Boodhists of Ceylon observe every quarter of the moon, so that their sacred days occur about once a week. The Burmans keep holy only the days of full moon and change, having but two festivals a month.

On these days common business is suspended, people resort to the temples to worship Gotama or Boodh, with offerings of rice, flowers, fruits, candles, &c. Old people often fast during the day. The priests do not officiate in the temples, but give religious instruction out of their sacred books to those who attend their colleges, or monasteries, for that purpose. This account is from Ward and applies chiefly to the Burmans.*

There is a fundamental principle of the religious philosophy of both Brahmins and Boodhists, that will explain much of what may seem obscure.

Saints, especially those of high degree, are revered as having a portion of divine energy dwelling in them, and as partaking, so far, of the divine nature. Brahm, the supreme god of the Hindoos, though supposed to be generally quiescent and even unconscious, is believed however to have periodical fits of energy, from which all spiritual beings, and all extraordinary manifestations of spiritual power, proceed. When, therefore, a human saint exhibits a high control over his corporeal and mental system, in the voluntary endurance of sufferings, and in abstraction of mind from all earthly things, he is supposed to be energized by the universal spirit of Brahm, and to possess a portion of divinity.

The divine energy attributed to Brahm by the Hindoos, is by the Boodhists supposed to reside in nature. This energy, when imparted in an extraordinary degree, to human souls, is therefore supposed to raise them to the rank of gods, and to make them proper objects of religious worship after death, when they ascend to the heavens, and reign in subordination to the supreme power of nature.

§ 3. *Monachism in Burmah, Siam, and Cochin China.*

The island of Ceylon was one of the earliest seats of Boodhism

* Ward's View, book vi. ch. ii. as before cited.

after its expulsion from Hindostan: but its monastic institutions present nothing peculiar or remarkable, except it be that the monk-priests were formerly, and perhaps are yet, exceedingly ostentatious in their devotions. Like many of their Christian brethren, they walked the streets with their lips and their beads in constant play, muttering and counting their prayers, as if entirely absorbed in their devout exercises;—an infallible sign that they were hypocrites, like the Pharisees of old, and sought the praise of men rather than the praise of God.

The empire of Burmah comprehends the countries of Aracan, Ava, and Pegu. We have already given a general account of Burman monachism. We add some particulars, taken from modern books of travels.

In Aracan, “there are three classes of priests. Their chief, who resides in the Island of Munay, has the direction of the public worship. His orders are seldom disobeyed. The respect which he inspires, approaches to adoration. The king, absolute, as he is, never disputes the precedency with him at ceremonies, and is never covered before him.”

So, here we find a little pope among the Boodhists—one almost as God-like in power, as his holiness of Rome was five hundred years ago. But we shall find a much greater Boodhist pope after a while.

“All the priests,” says a traveller, “condemn themselves to eternal celibacy. Whoever transgresses on that point, is immediately degraded, and thrown back among the profane. Though all obey the same chief, they do not all observe the same discipline. Some live retired in private abodes, at their own expense. Retired from the world, and despising the pleasures of life, they are forgotten by mankind, and inhabit only rocks in gloomy forests or deserts. When the wants of life oblige them to appear in public, they have an humble aspect and downcast eyes; but their modesty seems to be an artifice to command admiration. Others, more happy and less solitary, inhabit magnificent palaces, (that is, monasteries,) where they indolently enjoy the wealth

that the king and princes bestow on them, *with the view of ingratiating themselves with heaven.*

“These idolatrous priests are intrusted with the education of youth, as if men dedicated solely to prayer and mortification, were qualified to form magistrates, warriors, artists, and ministers of state. There are, also, hermits—a sort of wild men, who are esteemed in proportion as they are fantastic. They, like the priests, are divided into three orders, who all renounce the strongest passions of our nature, with an idea of thereby pleasing the Creator, who wisely bestowed these very passions on us, to be enjoyed, but not abused, nor wholly neglected.”*

Every trait in this description has its exact counterpart in the ancient and modern monachism of Christendom.

At Rangoon, in Pegu, are many convents, a little way out of the city. The number of Rhahaans and Phongis—the senior and junior orders of priests—was formerly estimated at one thousand five hundred. “Like the Carmelite monks of Europe, they have their heads close shaven.”

These clerical monks, like the mendicant orders of Europe, have no need of storehouse or barn; for the pious working people feed them daily, with food ready cooked. All that the brethren have to do, is to detail certain of their number, who shall travel the streets every morning, with an open provision box. They have no need to beg; the good people watch opportunities to drop their offerings into the box, believing that these charities will be richly rewarded with spiritual blessings. Thus the monks always have a plentiful dinner.

The monk-priests wear yellow clothing. This is the distinguishing color of the Boodhist priesthood, and so it was five hundred years—possibly fifteen hundred years—ago; though in Cochin China and Japan, other colors were also worn to distinguish several orders of monks. The Burman monks, as well as those of other countries, profess to abstain from every sensual indulgence. To prevent the brethren, especially the younger,

* Pinkerton's Collection of Voyages and Travels, vol. 9, p. 762.

from falling into temptation, no one may go out of the cloister without leave of the prior.

A Rhahaan detected in a violation of chastity, is punished by daubing his face with white and black, mounting him on an ass, drumming him through the streets, and out into the commons, where he is turned loose, and told to go and shift for himself.*

In ascending the great river Irrawady, Syme noticed, in a tall, perpendicular cliff, by the water side, some apertures, resembling doorways. He was told that these were the entrances of cells cut into the rock in former times by hermits, who spent their lives in those inaccessible dens. Their food had to be let down to them with cords from above.† The same sort of fantastical monkery formerly displayed itself in the church. It found practitioners enough, while the vain devotees drew admiring crowds about their dens, and were duly fed by obsequious attendants. But when the fashion changed, and they were left to enjoy their wolf-like solitude unvisited, their holes were left untenanted, except, perhaps, here and there by one Troglodyte, whose melancholy mood drove him into gloomy seclusion; like those madmen described in the gospel, who dwelt in the tombs, because they were possessed by a legion of demons. But we never read of these solitary devotees having suffered themselves to starve outright, much as they hated to eat and drink.

In Siam, the monk-priests are called Talapoins. They live, for the most part, in large cloisters about the towns. Within the walls are separate buildings and cells for the inmates. There is an anchorite class of Talapoins, who retire into the gloomy recesses of the forests, and there lead a purely contemplative life, where a luxuriant tropical vegetation casts a perpetual twilight over the earth, and tigers and serpents share the dismal solitude. These melancholy Talapoins, remind us of the ancient woods-philosophers of India, in the days of Alexander the Great.

The profession of a Talapoin is thought to have such sanctity

* Syme's Embassy to Ava, chap. 4.

† Chap. 9.

and such merit, that all the Siamese are desirous of sharing its advantages. Hence, be it only for two or three days, they get themselves admitted into a cloister, and invested with the sacred costume. Being, thereby, sanctified, once for all, they live and die more contented. Thus, in the days when Popery was absolute in Europe, a superstitious villain died happy, if he could breathe his last, and be buried, in the coarse rope-girded habit of a Franciscan beggar-monk. Then he thought the devil would not dare to touch him. The infallible church did not condemn prevailing notions of this sort. They were useful to her. They gave, not only to herself, bodily, but to every rag and rope of her trumpery, a precious sanctity in the eyes of her subjects—the wicked no less than the righteous.

The regular Talapoins carried the doctrine of the evil nature of the body, and its pleasures, a little farther, we think, than other Boodhists. They held, and, we presume, do still hold, that marriage is always sinful, and that it is sinful even to look at a woman. No wonder, then, that they burn to death without mercy, every brother who is convicted of unchastity. But the Talapoinesses, or nuns, who occupy separate cloisters, are not so rigorously punished for this crime.* Whether the priests regard female chastity as less important, or the frailty of the sex as a palliation, we cannot tell. The Talapoins, when they denounce the smelling of perfumes—even those of flowers—as sinful, only follow the laws of Boodh; but where did they learn that it was sinful to make a hole in the ground, or to shed one's urine upon water, or fire, or the lap of mother earth?

Like the Roman Catholics, they hold the doctrine of confession to a priest, and the penitential efficacy of fasting, and such like austerities. Pilgrimages to holy places, they deem meritorious. They devoutly worship their dead saints. Their worship in the temples consists of ceremonies and entertainments. The Talapoins in the cloisters must not work, but meditate, pray, sing, preach, &c. They are zealous preachers, holding forth,

* Picard, *Ceremonies et Coutumes*, Tome I. Siam.

sometimes, nearly all the day long. They have the priestly tonsure, and practice frequent ablutions.*

The superstitious people hold the Talapoins in great reverence, as we may infer from the zeal with which they feed them. Gothard Arthus, (quoted by Hospinian,) mentioned, some centuries ago, another and more striking proof of the fact. The Talapoins—more cleanly than Christian monks—frequently bathed themselves. The common people deemed that the water that took off their carnal impurities, was not only sanctified by the process, but endued with a sanctifying virtue.

Therefore, they eagerly got it, and used it as a salutary drink.

Carl Ritter says that Boodhism was introduced into Siam, in the year of our Lord, 638.†

Cochin China, south of the great Chinese empire, is another country in which the religion of Boodh has been established for many ages. Here the Jesuit missionaries found it about three centuries ago, and found, to their astonishment, that it was a religion, which, though thoroughly heathenish, was most wonderfully like their own. In proof of this, we shall give the authority of Borri, one of these missionaries. The following long extract is taken from a translation of Borri's Account of Cochin China. The reader may find it in Pinkerton's collection, vol. ix p. 762.

"There is," says Borri, "such a variety of Omsais (or heathen priests) in that country, that it looks as if the devil had endeavored among the Gentiles, to represent the beauty and variety of religious orders (that is, of monks) in the Catholic Church; their several habits answering their several professions: some are clad in white, some in black, and some in blue and other colors: some live in community, others like chaplains, canons, and prebendaries. Others profess poverty, living on alms; others exercise works of mercy, administering to the sick, &c.

* Carl Ritter, *Erdkunde von Asien*, Band. IV., Sec. 1170.

† *Erdkunde*, Band IV. S. 1155.

Others, again, look to the monasteries of women, who live in community, and admit no man among them, but the Omsaii who looks after them, and *they are all his wives.*"

We fear that the zealous missionary was too hasty in imputing such unchaste practices to his Boodhist brethren and sisters, though the charge is not incredible; such monastic concubinage having been rather usual among the monks and nuns of the Jesuit's own church. But hear him further—

"There are vast temples with beautiful towers and steeples. The idols are generally very large statues, with abundance of gold and silver shut up in their breasts or bellies. What is remarkable, the priests have chaplets and strings of beads about their necks, and make so many processions, that they outdo the (Roman Catholic) Christians in praying to their false Gods. There are also among them persons resembling bishops, and abbots, and archbishops; and they use gilt staves not unlike our croziers; insomuch, that if any man come newly into that country, he might be easily persuaded there had been Christians there in former times; *so near has the devil endeavored to imitate us.*"

Here Borri has reversed the truth. If Boodhism be of the devil, then, since it is older than Romanism, he should rather have said, "*so nearly have we endeavored to imitate the devil.*" We do not adopt this language; we only say, that if there be imitation in the case, the Romanists were the imitators.

But Borri proceeds to say, that the Boodhists of Cochin China believe in future rewards and punishments. He charges them with error in not distinguishing between the human soul and demons, and in assigning transmigration as one of the rewards of the soul. The reader is aware that these errors are common to the Brahmins and the Boodhists.

Another error, or rather superstition, that he imputes to them, is, that the souls of the dead stand in need of corporeal food; for which reason the friends of the deceased set out food for them. In answer to the objection that spirits have no mouths, and that the food set out for them remains unconsumed, these ingenious

heathen said that "the meat consisted of two parts, the one substance, the other accidents of quantity, quality, smell, taste, and the like. The immaterial souls of the dead, (say they,) take only the *substance* of the meat, which being immaterial, is proper sustenance for the spirit, and left only the *accidents* in the dishes, as they appeared to our corporeal eyes."

We admire the subtlety of this answer. It would have done credit to the angelic doctor Thomas Aquinas; and we are astonished that a believer in the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, should reject it as unsound, when he himself believes—or professes to believe—that when a priest says *Hoc est corpus* over the bread and wine of the sacrament, the *substance* of these meats is taken away, and the *accidents* remain. Even in this, the subtlest philosophical theory ever invented to give seeming possibility to an infinite absurdity, the heathen Boodhist had anticipated the atom-splitting schoolman of Rome. Or if the former did not *anticipate* the latter, so as to give the devil the credit of the invention, then let Boodhist and Romanist alike share the honor of devising this philosophical absurdity of supposing the accidents or sensible properties of a body to exist without any substance, or with the substance of an entirely different body! It is equivalent to supposing that by the evidence of sense a thing *is*, when in fact it is *not*. But if our senses give fallacious evidence, then nature and nature's God may be all an illusion. The foundations of belief are subverted, and nothing can present itself with evidence of reality, but our own thoughts and feelings. But let us hear what more Borri has to say of the Cochin Chinese.

"They also err (says he) in respect to the souls themselves, adoring those of men who were looked upon as holy in this world, adding them to the number of their idols.

[Listen ye saint worshippers of Rome, to your Jesuit Borri!]

"But the high altar, (says he—and Roman Catholics know very well what is meant by the high altar—) being the most honorable place in the temple, is purposely kept empty, behind which is a vacant dark space, to express him whom they adore as God.

Such a multitude of idols, by them accounted gods, giving us occasion to endeavor to demonstrate to them, that there can be but one God, *they agreed to it*, saying that they whose images they placed along the sides of the temples, were not they that had created the heavens and the earth, but *holy men whom they honored as we do the holy apostles, martyrs, and confessors*, with the same distinction of greater and lesser sanctity, as we assign among *our saints*. And therefore, to corroborate their assertion, they added that the vacant dark place about the high altar was the proper place of the Creator, who being invisible, could not be represented by visible images; but that under that vacuity and darkness the adoration was to be given to him as to a thing incomprehensible, using the *intercession of the idols*, (or saints,) that they may obtain favors and blessings of him (for their worshippers.”)

If Borri does not here describe a Boodhist saint-worship precisely similar to that of the Roman Catholics, then we know not what can be like it. Indeed the Boodhist doctrine and worship in this country, so far as he describes them in the above extracts, are even, in his own opinion, the exact counterparts of the Romish system.

Their doctrine concerning a divine creator of the world, was either misunderstood by the missionary, or the Cochin Chinese have, on this point, varied from the doctrine of Boodh, as late writers have generally represented it.

Tonquin is a country lying between Cochin China and the empire of China. Here, likewise, Boodhism is the predominant religion, and still carries all the leading features of its resemblance to Romanism—namely, its convents of monks and nuns, confession of sins to the priests, with priestly absolution; holy water; temples and altars lighted, and holy flambeaux; rosaries on which to count repetitions of prayers; religious festivals and jubilees; sale of dispensations or indulgences, &c. Their monk-priests are said to promise themselves plenty of wives in heaven for their con-

tinence upon earth ; for what is a sin here, they think will be a virtue there. The monasteries are reported to be places of debauchery ; if so, the priests must act upon the principle, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

§ 4. *Monachism among the Lamaists of Thibet.*

In the cold mountains of Thibet, the religion of Boodh has assumed the form of Lamaism ; the peculiarity of which is, that there is an order of superior priests called Lamas ; whose supreme head is the Grand Lama, worshipped as an incarnation of the supreme God, and also has several provincial subordinates, worshipped also as incarnations of secondary gods.

Nowhere in the world does monachism prevail as it does in this poor wintry region of mountains and lakes. Monasteries are found occupying choice situations in all the inhabited parts of the country. These are filled with hale, hearty fellows, who show by their looks, that they are well fed and live much at their ease. Once a-week, they march in procession to bathe themselves in the nearest water. Thrice a-day they assemble for prayer. They have their fasts and their festivals, their instrumental music and their hymns, and when they celebrate worship in the temples they make a prodigious noise. As far as Turner and other travellers in the country observed their conduct, they appeared to be gentle, orderly, and strictly chaste. Although, to the transient eye of a stranger, only the fairer side of their character would appear ; yet from all accounts, there seems to be no reason to doubt, that they live as inoffensively as any monks in the world. Turner observed that they shut up their cloisters every evening, that the young friars and novices might have no opportunity of intercourse with women. Sometimes, however, "love laughs at locksmiths:" but then, let us not suspect evil, when all appearances are good.

In Thibet the Boodhist priests constitute a complete and regular hierarchy. Besides the Gylongs, or common monk-priests, they have Lamas of different ranks, human and divine ; and at the

head of all is the Grand Lama, who is the Pope of northern Boodhism, and of higher dignity than even the Pope of Rome, who is God's vicegerent ; for the Grand Lama is the great God himself, incarnate. He never dies ; he only transmigrates from an old body into a new one. No sooner has he left one human body, than the priests of his court search for him in some new-born infant, and never fail to discover him by infallible marks. What those marks are, we know not : but what does it matter ? The priests know them, and that is sufficient. The same remarks apply to the secondary divine Lamas, who rule over provinces in subordination to the supreme god incarnate, who resides in the city of Lassa.

The Lamaists of Thibet have some remarkable superstitions among them. We shall mention two things, in which they have gone beyond even the Romanists.

The one is a singular contrivance, which they have made for the purpose of expediting prayers. It is a barrel-formed cylinder, balanced on an axis, and easily turned by a touch of the hand. It is covered with written prayers and characters of mysterious import. It is placed near the doors of temples and by road-sides. Every devout passer-by gives the cylinder a turn, and thus puts all the prayers in motion at once. This is considered as equivalent to an oral repetition of them all, which would require no little time and labor. We commend this prayer-saving machine to the notice of our Roman Catholic friends, when they have to repeat hundreds of Paternosters and Ave Marias daily as a penance for their sins, and have to mumble them over with all possible haste, and to count them on the beads of the rosary. We submit it to their pious consideration, whether they might not as well turn them on a wheel.

The other matter concerns the Grand Lama's excrements ; which being those of a god upon earth, are believed to have in them a divine virtue to heal the ailments of poor mortals, and to guard them against evil spirits and evil accidents. Therefore the priests preserve them with intense care, and deal them

out in small portions to the faithful. The faithful reverently mix the precious substance with their food, as a divine medicine ; reserving a small part, which they inclose in a little sack, and wear as an amulet suspended from the neck.

The Roman Catholics have equal faith in the relics, sound or rotten, of their *dead* saints ; and so far they are as devout as the Boodhists of Thibet ; but we do not think that they carry their devotion to the relics of the *living* Pope to the same extent. They seem to think that there is beatitude enough in kneeling before his holiness and kissing his BIG TOE.

When the Jesuit missionaries, a century or two ago, entered Thibet for the purpose of converting the people to Romanism, the were amazed to find a religion established there which they could scarcely distinguish from their own.* The resemblance was even more complete than it was in Cochín China and Tonquin.

There, as we have already stated, was a hierarchy of priests corresponding with their own ;—and there a complete system of monachism, with monasteries, nunneries, and hermitages, and monks by thousands and tens of thousands,—all under the same vows as the Roman Catholic, and subject to the same government and discipline ;—and all, up to the Grand Lama himself, with shaven heads, like their own priesthood, and clothed in similar showy sacerdotal robes and caps.

There was a chief holy city like Rome with its Pope, and inferior holy cities with their grand dignitaries, like the metropolitan archbishops and patriarchs of Christendom ;—all, but especially the holiest of all, full of priests, temples, monasteries, ceremonies, festivals, processions, and pilgrims from distant lands.

In the temples, they saw a showy ceremonial worship like their

* See the description of Thibet in Pinkerton's Collection of Voyages and Travels, vol. vii. The author took his account of these things from the published letters of the Romish missionaries.

own ;—an altar for sacrifice, and a mass of bread and wine offered upon it ; images of saint-gods, before which the worshippers bowed—holy water with which they were sprinkled—prayers in a dead language, and rosaries or strings of beads on which to count them.

There too they found sins confessed to priests, and penitents fasting, repeating prayers with the rosary, and whipping themselves :—there the doctrine of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and extreme unction for the dying.

The Romish missionaries were so confounded by the general appearance of conformity between Lamaist Boodhism and Romanist Catholicism, that they did not know what to think, or what to do. They had nothing, or almost nothing, to convert, except some doctrines and some names and titles.

The most mortifying circumstance was, the claim of this religion to a higher antiquity than that of their own Church—"The Mother and Mistress of all Churches." This claim, if admitted, would make "Holy Mother," in her most distinguishing features, the *image*, if not the *offspring*, of heathenism. They could imagine no other way of evading this humiliating conclusion, than by supposing that these people were a sort of bastard Christians, who had once been a part of the true church, but had somehow, most strangely and unaccountably, substituted the Boodhist theology for the Christian, while they retained the forms and institutions of the Catholic Church.

The supposition is egregiously absurd, not only in itself, as a sort of thing unheard of amongst men and morally impossible, but in relation also to the fact, that neither the country nor the religion of Thibet exhibits a remnant or a trace of the religion of the Bible ; not a tradition, not a name even, nor a token of any sort, except the points of resemblance to Romanism above-mentioned ; and not one of these appertains to Scriptural Christianity—they are all of heathenish origin.

The only historical fact that could give the slightest plausibility to this supposition is, that a thousand years ago, more or less, the

Nestorians sent missionaries into Eastern Asia, and planted churches in Tartary, Northern Thibet, and Northern China.

On this foundation the Romish missionaries endeavored to build their theory of the Christian origin of those Boodhist doctrines, institutions, and forms of worship, which give such a Roman Catholic appearance to Boodhism.

The learned Malte Brun, in his geography, adopts this theory ; and Carl Ritter, in his great German work on Asia, supposes that the Lamaists borrowed some religious forms and ceremonies from the Nestorians, who formerly existed among them. This opinion differs much from that of the missionaries before-mentioned ; yet even of this Ritter himself produces no evidence, except the mere presumption arising from the conformity of Romanism with Lamaism. But this presumption is overthrown by the fact, that nearly the same conformity exists in Cochin China, in Tonquin, and, as we shall hereafter show, in Japan—countries far beyond the bounds of the Nestorian missions. No Christian church was ever planted within 1500 miles of them. The only Boodhists with whom the Nestorians came in contact were the Lamaists of Thibet, Tartary, and Cathay, or Northern China. But the Boodhists of Cochin China, Tonquin, and Japan are not Lamaists. If any of them derived their religion from Thibet, it must have been at a period antecedent to the rise of Lamaism, and to the existence of Nestorian churches in Northern Thibet or Cathay. The opinion that the Lamaists were once Nestorian Christians, and retained their forms of worship when they embraced Boodhism, is as contrary to historical facts, as it is to rational probability. Ritter's opinion, that the Lamaists embellished their ceremonial by adopting in part the practices of the Nestorians among them, is founded, as he says himself, upon the conformity observed by the Romish missionaries in later times between the Lamaist worship and their own.* He seems not to have been aware that the missionaries observed almost the same conformity

* Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. 2, page 283, &c.

in Cochin China and Japan, and in like manner ascribed it to the malice of the devil.

Though it is not, and cannot be, pretended that the Boodhists derived their monachism from the Nestorians, yet we deem it interesting, both in itself and for the illustration of our subject, to pursue the argument somewhat farther. The religious history of Central Asia, where different systems met and mingled for centuries, is curious and little known. We have room for only a few facts.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, was condemned by a Council in the year 431, for denying that St. Mary was *God's mother*. The Catholics persecuted his followers, who took refuge in Persia, where they were protected by the king. This opened Asia to their missions. By the year 500 they had spread as far as Bactria and India. By the year 636 their missions extended to China, according to an inscription on a marble slab found in that country about two hundred years ago. The inscription was partly in the Syriac language, and purported to have been made in the year 781. Its genuineness is very doubtful. Setting that aside, it does not appear that the Nestorians penetrated into Cathay or Northern China till after the year 1000. But they had previously planted churches in Tangut, or Northern Thibet, and in Tartary. Such was the progress of Nestorianism.*

In the seventh and eight centuries the Mahometans extended their missions into Central Asia. They interfered seriously with the progress of Christianity.

The Magians, or Persian fire-worshippers, were, at the same time, advancing their missions eastward into the same extensive regions.

Before all these, the Boodhists of Thibet had been pushing the missionaries of their religion into Tartary and China. As early as the year 400 of our era, they had planted Boodhism in the Chinese

* Mosheim. Ch. Hist. Centuries X., XI., XII. Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. 2, p. 283, &c.

province of Shen-si on the upper waters of the Hoangho.* Before the Nestorians had penetrated to the borders of China, the Boodhists had already established one hundred monasteries in the city of Khotan, upon the high table-land of Tartary, and upon the waters of the great river that flows north and east into the Lop Sea. This was the route by which the caravans passed through Central Asia, between Cathay and Persia, or India. By the Lop Sea and its river Yarkiang, did the missionaries of four religions meet on their way to the great valley of the Hoangho, and the populous cities of Cathay. It is certain that the Boodhists were the earliest and the most successful of them all. For some time, however, the Nestorians flourished and, in some parts they became the prevailing denomination. In the twelfth century arose the great Tartar chief, Gingham Khan, a Mahometan, who reduced all Tartary under his dominion, and greatly injured Christianity. From that time Nestorianism began to decline in Eastern Asia.

In the thirteenth century, Rubruquis, a monk, was sent by Louis IX., of France, into Tartary; and Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant, went to Cathay. Both of them found Nestorian Christians in Tartary, and Polo found them in Cathay, mixed everywhere with Mahometans or Boodhists, often with both, and in a few places with Magian fire-worshippers. These travellers usually called those idolaters, who were not Christians or Mahometans. We should remark that *the Nestorians rejected the use of images in worship, while the Boodhist, like the Roman Catholic, used them.* This made a notable difference between the Christians and the Boodhists of Asia; though it was afterwards a feature of resemblance, when Romanism came into contact with Boodhism.

Both these early travellers in Asia agree in representing the monastic institutions which they met with, as exclusively belonging to the idolaters—that is, the Boodhists. This is an important fact in the present investigation. Another important fact is, that between the Christians and the idolaters, though there seems to

* Ritter, Erdkunde, vol. 2, p. 205, &c.

have been peace, there was nothing like fraternization or amalgamation. The line of separation was strongly drawn, and there was no appearance of the one melting into the other. No such change appears to have been going on as the hypothesis which we are examining supposes. Nestorian Christianity afterwards became extinct in those countries; that is certain; but it must have come to pass by the destruction or conversion of its professors, not by the amalgamation of two religions.

We shall now confirm these statements by quoting from these early Christian travellers.

Rubruquis, describing the rites and ceremonies common to the idol temples at Cailac in Tartary, says that the priests had their heads and faces shaven, and were clad in yellow garments, with yellow hoods or caps—(the Boodhist uniform)—that after being shaven, they lived unmarried, one or two hundred together in a cloister. They also carried about with them strings of nut-shells, much like the beads of the Roman Catholics, and often repeated the same form of prayer. Such precisely are the Boodhist priests of modern times.

Again, says Rubruquis, speaking of the nations that inhabit Northeastern Asia, "They are all given to idolatry. The Nestorians live among them as strangers, and so do the Saracens—or Mahometans—as far as Cathay. The Nestorians inhabit fifteen cities of Cathay, and have a bishop there in a city called Segin. But if you proceed further, they are mere idolators. The priests of the idols of those nations have all broad yellow hoods—(that is, they are Boodhists.) *There are also among them certain hermits, living in woods and mountains, of an austere and strange life.* The Nestorians there know nothing; for they say their service out of holy books in the Syrian tongue, which they do not understand. They are great usurers and drunkards; and some of them also, who live among the Tartars, have a plurality of wives. The bishops visit them only once in a long time. *By their evil life and covetousness, they drive the idolators farther from*

Christianity; because the life of the Moguls and Tuimians, who are idolaters, is more just and upright than theirs."

But enough of Rubruquis; let us now take some quotations from Marco Polo.

"In the province of Chesmur (Cashmere?), the inhabitants are idolaters above all others, cunning enchanterers, forcing their idols to speak, and darkening the day. *There are certain hermits in this province, who, in monasteries and cells worship idols, honoring their gods with great abstinence of meat and drink, and observe great chastity. They live long. Many of them are reputed saints, and the people show them great reverence. The men of this province kill no living creature, and shed no blood.*"

"In Sachion, a city of Tangut, a few Nestorian Christians are found among the worshippers of Mahomet. Many idolaters are, also, there. The city hath *many monasteries consecrated to idols.*"

Again, he says, "Campion is a great city, the principal of the country of Tangut. In it are Christians, who have three great and fair churches. The rest are Mahometans and idolaters. *The idolaters have many monasteries, where they worship their idols. The monks live more honestly than other idolaters, abstaining from whoredom and other base things.*"

Again, speaking of Jangamur, in Cathay, the place

"Where Rublai Khan
A stately pleasure dome decreed,"

whose beauties so fired the imagination of Coleridge, he says "there are two sorts of idolaters, called Chebeth and Chesmu, who, in the midst of storms ascend the palace, and suffer no rain to fall thereon, which they make the people believe comes to pass by their sanctity, and, therefore, *they go slovenly, and negligent of their persons, never washing nor combing themselves.* They are also called Backsi, which is the name of their order, as Friars Predicants, or Minors, with us. They have *great monasteries, some of the bigness of a city, in which are about two thousand monks, who serve an idol, and are sequestered from the laity,*

as appears from their shaving their heads and beards, and wearing a religious garment. There are some called Sensim, who observe strict abstinence, leading an austere life ; for they eat nothing but meal mingled with water, till all the flour be gone, and then they eat the bran. These worship the fire ; and the men of other rules say that they are heretics, because they worship not idols as they do. They shave their head and beard, and wear hempen garments, either black or of a bright yellow. They sleep on mats, and live the severest life in the world.”*

Again, speaking of the great city of Quinsai, in China, he says that the people are *idolaters*, and have *monasteries with many monks*. He describes all the southern parts of China as being filled with idolaters, and makes no mention of Christians and Mahometans there.

He speaks of the great province of Mangi as abounding in *monasteries of idolatrous monks*, but no Christians except a few lately sent there by the great Rublai Khan.

Prester John.

During the Middle Ages, while the Crusaders were warring in Palestine, they heard a rumor of a Christian sovereign somewhere in the far East, who was called Prester John,—that is, Presbyter or Priest John. The rumor was soon carried through Europe and excited a lively curiosity to learn something definite respecting this mysterious priest-king, whose name was John. As always happens when people are eager to hear, rumor after rumor was spread respecting this Prester John ; some placing him in one eastern country and some in another ; but all agreed in attributing to him great power and a magnificent court. Still no one in particular could testify that he had seen him or visited his country. In those ages of war between Christians in Europe, and Mahometans in Asia, rarely did it happen that a Christian traveller was venturesome enough, or successful enough, to penetrate to

* From this it appears that the Magian fire-worshippers had their monks, too. But no mention is made of Christian monks.

Eastern Asia, where it was supposed that Prester John reigned among surrounding nations of infidels. Though many years had elapsed from the beginning of the rumor, before Marco Polo succeeded in traversing the vast and little known regions of the far East, still it was supposed that Prester John was reigning in that quarter of the world, and Polo was resolved, if possible, to discover the place of his kingdom. But, although he traversed Asia east and north and south, still Prester John, like the horizon, seemed to fly from his approach. At last, however, though he did not find him, he imagined that he obtained information of where he was to be found.

He heard of a province called Tenduc or Tandach, lying eastward of Tangut, which is north-east of Thibet. "Here," says he, "Prester John resides, who now pays tribute to the Great Khan. The king of that nation is called George, and is a Christian priest; and most of the people are Christians. All the Great Khans, since the death of Prester John, who was slain by Ghingis Khan, —give their daughters to these Christian kings to wife. But this king George holdeth not all that Priest John before held. He is the fourth of that family. There is a nation there called Argons, descended of idolaters and Mahometans. There are also two regions where they dwell, called Gog and Magog; but they which dwell there call them Ung and Mongul. In Ung are Gog and in Mongul are Tartars. Riding east seven days towards Cathay, are many cities peopled by idolaters, Mahometans, and Nestorians."

Such was the report that Polo heard and was fain to believe, for the want of something better. By the aid of his imagination, he also discovered the Gog and Magog of the Scriptures in the Chinese name Ung and the Tartar name Mongul. Ritter thinks that the name of Prester John might be derived from the Chinese title *Ung Khan* or *Oan Khan*, meaning over-king or great king, the title by which the great Tartar Khans of those times were distinguished. The resemblance of Ung, or Oan, to Joan (pronounced Yoan), connected with the report spread by the

Nestorians of the conversion of an eastern king to Christianity, might in those times give rise to the whole story of Prester John.

In the year 1046, the Nestorian Archbishop of Samarchand published an epistle, announcing that multitudes of converts had been made in Thibet and Khotan, and that the Nestorians had seven kings and 70,000 horsemen, and that their king was called Nasarat.* Carl Ritter thinks that these must have been the Turks, who then began to bestir themselves in Central Asia, and ruled over countries in which many Nestorians lived. It was one of their princes who was said to been a few years before this time converted to Christianity. A confused report of all these matters may have originated the story of Prester John.

As to Polo's Prester George in the province of Tandach or Tenduc, he was never found; though the enterprising Venetian pursued all the great routes of travel through the eastern parts of Central Asia, in which this visionary priest-king must have been, if he had a local habitation as well as a name. He traversed the whole of Tangut; he describes the more southern country of Thebet or Thibet. He says that the people of this region were idolators, and prostituted their wives and daughters in honor of their idols. He mentions the great city of Cainduc on the eastern border of the country,—also of the great lakes that are laid down on our maps, and of the great extent of the country westward from Cainduc; yet, with the exception of a few Nestorians and Mahometans on the western border, the whole population of Thibet was composed of idolators; that is, of Boodhists. It is evident, therefore, that no Prester John ever exisited in Thibet; and what is directly to the point of our present investigation, Christianity never obtained a footing there; nor could it have exercised any influence in forming the Lamaist system of Boodhism, which had its chief seat and probably its origin at Lassa, where Christianity does not appear ever to have

* This epistle is found in the Syrian Annals of Abulfardi. See Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. ii. p. 283, &c.

had a church or even a missionary, before the Roman Catholics found there the exact counterpart of their own corrupt system of heathenish Christianity.

Polo did not travel through this part of Thibet, and does not mention the Grand Lama. He travelled nearly six hundred years ago, and the power of this Boodhist pope may have been in its infancy, though his brother at Rome was then in the full magnitude of his vicarious godhead.

Nestorianism, though it carried with it some of the early corruptions of Christianity, came yet far short of the Roman Catholic system, to which Lamaism in Thibet was found to bear so striking a resemblance. Romanism and Lamaism are more nearly alike than Romanism and Nestorianism, in everything except their Christian theology, in which Boodhism differs from both.

It is evident from the reports of Rubruquis and Polo, that Christianity was declining in Eastern Asia in the thirteenth century. Boodhism on the one hand, and Mahometanism on the other, were pressing it down; its fall was hastened by the ignorance and the vices of its professors, and by the want of support from the West, where Mahometanism was bearing down all denominations of Christians in Asia. About two hundred years later, when the Romish missionaries began to penetrate the interior of Eastern Asia, not a remnant of Nestorianism was found in the countries where it had flourished a few centuries before.

Here we close our investigation of a curious and obscure part of the religious history of Central and Eastern Asia. We have thought it to be sufficiently interesting in itself, and sufficiently pertinent to our main subject, to justify the space which we have given to the examination of a hypothesis, resorted to, in the first place, by Romish missionaries, and too hastily adopted by some learned men to account for the close resemblance between Romish Christianity and Boodhism, as it exists in several countries, but especially among the Lamaists of Thibet.

§ 5. *Monachism in China and Korea.*

The Chinese are divided in their religious sentiments ; some adhering to the doctrines of their ancient philosopher Con-fut-see, or Confucius, whilst the greater number, especially among the common people, profess the religion of Fo, which is, in fact, the Lamaism of Thibet. The name Fo is nothing but the name Boodh modified, so as to adapt it to the Chinese habits of pronunciation.

Boodhism was introduced into China as early as the first century of our Christian era. Lamaism is probably of later origin even in Thibet ; but it is now the only form of Boodhism known to exist in the empire. It prevails most in the northern provinces and among the Tartars inhabiting the vast steppes of Upper Asia, as far as the Chinese dominion extends.

The extracts already given from Marco Polo demonstrate the flourishing state of Boodhist-Monachism in China six hundred years ago. Two centuries ago the Dutch sent an embassy to China. Nieuhoff, the secretary, wrote an account of the journey of the ambassadors from Canton to Pekin. From this account we take two significant extracts.

“ On the Maw-wha, near a delightful valley, stands a monastery with a spacious temple. It was built by Lu-zu, a reputed saint, who spent all his time in grinding and sifting rice for the monks, and wore iron chains day and night on his naked body. These made holes in his flesh, which, for want of dressing, putrified and bred nests of worms ; yet Lu-zu would not suffer them to be removed, but when one dropped off, he would pick it up again and say, ‘ *Have you not sufficient to feast yourselves left ? why then forsake you my body, where you are welcome to feed ?* ’ ”

Here was a consistent saint. Holding the Hindoo and Boodhist principle that the body is evil, he punished this vile part of his nature as a sinful thing. Holding that worms had souls like his own, though cramped for the present in mean bodies, he fed

them liberally on his flesh, which he conceived to be put to its best use, when it was eaten by worms.

But says Nieuhoff in another part of his work :

“In view of the city (Nankang) stand several stately temples ; the chief of them are built upon mountains, where dwell a great company of priests and friars, each in a little hut or cell, where they discipline themselves every day with lashing, which the people believe to be very meritorious in another world, for they hold the transmigration of souls. They told us that on Quanlyu (one of these mountains,) there were as many cloisters as days in the year.”

These pious monks might have passed for good Christians ; especially of the sort formerly in vogue among the Roman Catholics, and not yet extinct, called Flagellants or Whippers, if the author had not mentioned their belief in the transmigration of souls.

There are in China many sorts of fanatical monks—generally beggars—similar to the Hindoo Fakirs. The generality of these seem to be arrant impostors, who resort to various modes of self-torture, real or apparent, for the purpose of extracting alms from the people. Wherever there is superstitious credulity enough among the people, to reward such feats of pretended saintship with gifts and admiration, there we may be sure to find fanatics and impostors enough to turn this popular credulity to their advantage.

The peninsula of Korea has been rarely visited by Christians, and is little known. It is a dependency of the Chinese empire, and the religion of the country is Boodhism. Of course it has the monastic institutions that constitute an inseparable, if not an essential part of this ancient and wide-spread religion.

Nearly two hundred years ago, the Dutchman Hamel, was shipwrecked on the coast of Korea ; and afterwards wrote the best account that we have seen of this inhospitable country. He represented the people as having little except the form of the reli-

gion which they professed. But they had numerous monasteries, built chiefly, as in China, upon the tops of mountains. The early Christian monks of Asia followed the same custom, as we shall see hereafter, of locating themselves upon the mountains. "Some of their monasteries (says Hamel) contain five or six hundred monks, whereof there are four thousand within the liberties of some towns." In fact, Korea swarms with monks. When a brother offends against the rules, his superiors punish him with strokes on the buttocks. From this we may infer, what Hamel says, that the private members who are thus subjected to the bastinado upon their seat of honor, are despised; while their superiors, who have the privilege of giving the bastinado, are respected.* There are also nunneries in Korea. Some of the monasteries on the mountains, and in other secluded places, are represented as being places of resort for purposes of debauchery. But enough of Korea and its monachism.

§ 6. *Monachism in Japan.*

Finally, we arrive at the empire of Japan, that singular country of islands in the farthest east. Here is the eastern frontier of Boodhism, and much that is worthy of observation. We shall endeavor, as heretofore, to present, in a concise form, the most important and the most curious facts relative to the religion and the monachism of the country under consideration.

Here again, far beyond the utmost range of early Christianity,*

* This is another feature of resemblance between heathenist and Christian monachism. Christian abbots formerly beat offending monks with whips and cudgels.

* Meylan, a president of the Dutch factory in Japan, relates a story, professedly from Japanese records, of a religion introduced into Japan in the year fifty, after the birth of Christ; which religion, in some points, resembled Christianity, and which some would be eager to take for Christianity, in order to account for the resemblance between the Japanese religions and Romanism. But, unfortunately, Meylan says, that this religion was Brahminical; and the date of its introduction into Japan, is entirely too early to admit of its having been Christianity. Then, too, the doctrines supposed

Boodhism exhibited its striking similarity to Roman Catholicism, when the country was first visited by the Jesuit missionaries.

They found, in Japan, two sovereigns—a spiritual sovereign, like the Pope, residing in the holy city of Meaco ; and a temporal sovereign, like an emperor, residing in his capital city of Jeddo. The former was the original sovereign, but had lost all civil power. Under this spiritual sovereign were religious dignitaries, priests and monks, with a system of worship, doctrines and practices, essentially identical with those which distinguish Romanism from Biblical Christianity. We shall notice the leading particulars as we proceed.

The spiritual sovereign just alluded to, was not a Boodhist, like the Grand Lama of Thibet. He was the head of the primitive religion of Japan. This religion is called Sint-yu. It is a system of idolatry, acknowledging one primitive, and many subordinate gods ; but founded, in a great measure, upon the deification of the ancient kings and heroes of the country. In Japan, as in Rome, the Supreme Pontiff assumes to himself the exclusive prerogative of canonization—that is, of declaring who among the departed is, and shall be, worshipped as a god, or divine saint. He founds his decision upon the same principles, and the same sort of evidence, as his holiness of Rome does ; to wit, *that* departed soul of saint or hero has become a worshipful divinity, who has appeared after death, or has wrought miracles. When a temple is built to one of these new gods, *his relics are carefully deposited in the sacred enclosure, and venerated by the faithful*, just as the Romanists do with the relics of their canonized saints—nay, the two religions have a still closer agreement in this matter ; for both Sintoists and Romanists believe that *the relics have miraculous power in them*, because they are still animated, or, at least, haunted, by the souls that possessed them before death.

The Sintoists have also their monasteries of Cenobite monks, to have been Christian, namely, those of a Divine Trinity and of a Redeemer born of a Virgin, are found also among the Braminical sects.

and their wild hermits, who live in the desert mountains, like the Christian hermits of the fourth and fifth centuries. These wild hermits are called Jammaboes. Properly speaking, they are of a mixed sect, called Rioboo-Synsyu. They have no settled abodes, nor any regular system of exercise, but practice much bodily mortification to purify their souls, and make pilgrimages to certain high mountain-tops in the desolate regions of the country.

Picard* relates a singular story of the manner in which these mountain hermits confess penitents; but where he found the story we cannot tell, as he cites no authority. His great work is, however, generally accurate. Hurd, in his universal history of religions, relates the same story, but cites no authority.

When a sinner wishes to get absolution from these holy wild men of the deserts, he must climb the mountains, and find some of them who live about the outskirts. These border hermits will conduct him to others more savage than themselves, in the wildest parts of the mountains. The latter then prescribe to the penitent certain preparations for his confession. He must endure excessive fasting, climb rugged mountains, and scale lofty precipices. If he goes through this stage of his preparation without flinching, he is then conducted through pathless wilds to a dreary solitude, where he must sit still upon the ground for a day and a night, with his arms crossed, and his head resting upon his knees. He must not budge, nor show uneasiness in that posture; for if he do, the fierce guards who watch him, are sure to beat him well with their clubs. During these twenty-four hours, he must take a deliberate review of all his sins. Being thus prepared, he is marched, by fatiguing ways, to the top of a high rock to make his confession. A great beam projects over the perpendicular side of this rock, and a pair of large scales is suspended from the outer extremity of the beam. The machinery is so contrived, that the beam can be drawn in and pushed out at pleasure. The penitent is placed in one of the scales, and an equal weight in the other. Then the hermits push out the beam and suspend their

* *Ceremonies et Coutumes, &c., Tome 1, Des Japonais.*

penitent, nicely balanced, over the frightful precipice below. In this ticklish situation, he must make his confession with a loud voice. If he falter in the confession of any sin, or give indication that he wishes to conceal anything, his savage examiners give the beam a sudden jerk, so as to throw him out and let him fall upon the rocks below. We can scarcely doubt, that, in such circumstances, he would be careful and prompt—and loud also—in telling all that he could remember of his sins. If he satisfy his confessors that he has honestly discharged his conscience, he is relieved from his perilous situation, pays them a large fee, and is dismissed, with their absolution and a light heart, to render thanks to the gods, and to feast and make merry with his friends, in compensation for the labors and terrors of his confession.

We leave it to the judgment of our readers, whether or not this rough way of dealing with penitents be more likely to reform them, than the penances of the Roman Catholic priests, with their fish diet, (called fasting,) and their Paternosters and Ave Marias counted upon a strand of beads.

Hempfer in his history of Japan* remarks, that in his time these hermits had much degenerated from the austerity of their predecessors; who, according to the rules of their founder, lived upon nothing but wild plants and roots, and exposed themselves to perpetual and very rude trials and mortifications, fasting, plunging into cold water, wandering through rocky solitudes, and wild forests, and the like.

The same author informs us, that there are many more religious orders established in the country; that the common people have a superstitious veneration for their ecclesiastics; that a religious life was easy and pleasant, according to the custom of the time when he wrote; that the convents possessed great wealth; and that consequently many, under the cloak of devotion and retirement, became monks that they might give themselves to uninterrupted luxury and wantonness. Such, we may add, appears to be in every country, and under every system of religion, the

* For an account of the Religion of Japan, see chapters xi., xvi.

natural, if not the necessary course of monastic institutions. Being founded on principles contrary to nature, (whose author is God,) insulted nature will resume her sway ; having been forced out of the channel of virtuous enjoyment, she turns aside into the lawless courses of vice for gratification.

Boodhism, or Budsdo—as the Japanese call it—was propagated in Japan many ages ago, and in time gained a preponderance among the common people over the old Sintoism of the country ; insomuch that many of the Sintoists adopted a sort of mixed religion, compounded of the two. The mixture was not very difficult, because the two systems agreed in several fundamental principles.

We may remark by the way, that religious persecution was scarcely known in China and Japan, and a perfect religious freedom reigned, until the Romish missionaries so managed as to excite, first the jealousy, and then the enmity of the government. Being Jesuits, they pursued the jesuitical policy of making their religion subservient to their ambition. Their sort of Christianity had so much in common with the heathenish systems of the country, that they found it no difficult matter to make converts. But no sooner had they gathered a strong party of adherents, than they began to pursue a policy which excited the suspicion of political designs. In Japan they took part in a civil war, that they might gain political power. Hence in both China and Japan they were expelled from the country ; their followers were exterminated by persecution ; and the very name of Christianity was made so odious, as to render the conversion of these populous nations a very difficult undertaking. Protestant missionaries, before they can gain even a hearing for their doctrines, have before them the hard task of removing a deeply-rooted prejudice against the Christian name, and of demonstrating to unwilling minds, that there is a true Christianity materially different from Jesuitism ; one whose spirit is all purity, benevolence, peace, and submission to lawful authority ; and whose end is not worldly

power and wealth, but the salvation of the soul. But let us return to our subject.

As might be expected, Boodhism varies somewhat in different countries, retaining everywhere the material parts of the original system, but modified in some of its forms and circumstantialia. The Boodhists of Japan have in their ancient books the five precepts of their founder, called by them the precepts Siaka—namely, first, kill not; second, steal not; third, whore not; fourth, lie not; fifth, drink no strong liquors.

These five commandments are expanded, first into ten Sikkai, which serve for the general conduct of life; and these again into five hundred rules called Gosiakkai, which are intended for those who aim at moral perfection in this life, and the highest felicity in the life to come. They are exceedingly strict, and prescribe an ascetic life of the rudest and austere character; making the mortification of the bodily senses and appetites their chief end and aim. They show how deeply seated in the oriental mind, is that principle of the ancient heathen philosophy, which makes the chief part of human virtue consist in bodily mortifications. From this principle sprang the monachism of Eastern Asia; and with the introduction of this principle into the Christian Church in the second century, came asceticism; with its growth, in the third century, came monachism, with all its extravagancies.

The Boodhist Bible teaches doctrines very different from those taught in our Bible, but in some remarkable points identical with those of the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the doctrine of purgatory, or purification of the soul after death by torments for a limited time; and the doctrine of prayers and offerings—that is, of masses—for the souls in purgatory, who are supposed to be relieved in part or in whole by these masses, said by the priests and paid for by surviving friends.*

The priests also celebrate a yearly religious festival for the dead, very nearly in the same manner, and identically for the same purpose, as the Roman Catholics celebrate their Feast of

* Kempfer, ch. xvi.

All-Souls. "The priests perform the service every year on an appointed day, each in their rank, and in their own pagodas [or churches.] They go in a row, one after another in procession, round a covered grave, chanting litanies and a sort of service for the departed.*

In Japan, as elsewhere, the Boodhists have their monk-priests, their nuns, and their monasteries,—their shaven heads and their celibacy. Here they preach, read prayers in a dead language, bow to their idols, count their beads,—in short, do as the Roman Catholic priests do.

Here too they have stately temples with convents adjoining. The temples are full of gilded images,—“In the middle of the temple (says Kempfer)† stands a fine altar with some images upon it, and a beautiful candlestick with sweet-scented candles burning before it. The whole temple is so neatly and curiously adorned, that one would fancy himself transported into a Roman Catholic church, did not the *monstrous shape* of the idols evince the contrary.”

From this description of Kempfer, who saw what he describes, it is evident, that the only circumstance which distinguishes a Boodhist temple in Japan from a Roman Catholic church, is *the shape of the idols*.

No wonder that the Jesuit missionaries who visited Japan were astonished, as their brethren were in Cochin China and Thibet, to find among these remote heathen a religion so much like their own. Their letters expressed their astonishment. Besides the particulars already mentioned, they noticed the close similarity between the monastic institutions of the two religions, and between their priests and ceremonies. The Bonzes—as the Boodhist priests of Japan were called—had large libraries in their convents; they summoned the monks together by ringing brass bells; the prior every evening prescribed to his monks a theme on which they were to meditate; at midnight certain choirs took it in turn to chant prayers at the altar, like the matins of the Romish

* Pinkerton's Collection, vol. vii. p. 629.

† Ch. xx.

monks ; and at the dawn of day all the monks spent an hour in private meditation. They also had shaven heads and many festivals in the course of the year.

These things were good in themselves—in Roman Catholics very good ; but in these heathenish Bonzes, the wondering missionaries took them to be the work of the devil.

In reading such accounts of the Japanese monk-priests, one can hardly divest himself of the impression that they belonged to the Mother and Mistress of all Churches—the Catholic, or Universal Church, as she claims to be. But supposing Boodhism and Romanism to be not the same, then we can hardly shake off the impression that they are sisters, the offspring of a very ancient mother, the primitive religious philosophy and superstition of Eastern Asia.

The Romish missionaries in Japan were excessively provoked by the discovery of such a likeness between themselves and those whom they had come to convert. They hated their brethren, the Bonzes, with superlative hatred. In their letters they blackened their characters to all intents and purposes. What was commonly practised among the Romish clergy, they imputed as a mark of extreme depravity in the Japanese clergy.

For one thing, the Bonzes drove a pretty lucrative traffic in the sale of Indulgences. They drew bills, containing a form of words, which they assured the purchasers would not only keep off evil spirits in this world, but would serve as passports to the felicity of the world to come. They were equivalent, therefore, to the Roman Catholic Bills of Indulgence, in which Holy Mother formerly traded so very profitably, and in which she has continued to deal in those countries in which the article is still in demand. Yet this is one of the grounds on which the Romish missionaries charged the Bonzes with being morally the impurest of mankind and the most avaricious.

Another sin of which they accused the Bonzes was, that they would borrow money on a pledge of repayment in a future state ; and to secure the payment, they gave the lender a written bond,

which he was to carry with him into the other world. If this priestly trick was not misrepresented by the Jesuitical enemies of the Bonzes, it was a piece of scurvy imposture which could deceive only the most ignorant.* Yet, in a moral point of view, it was not a whit worse than the Popish Bills of Indulgence. Is it any more fraudulent to sell a bond payable in money after death, than to sell a bill payable in merit to save a man's soul from purgatory? Few would be simple enough to buy the cash bonds, but many millions have been imposed on by the merit-bills of the Infallible Church.

They also charged the Bonzes with refusing to offer sacrifices and prayers for the dead, until they had received a fee; and this they must have (said the missionaries) even when the surviving relation who applied for the service, was the poorest of men. Oh, the wicked Bonzes! No wonder the good Jesuits were indignant

* Yet a Christian bishop of the fifth century is related to have played the same sort of trick. In the year 410, Synesius, a Platonic philosopher of Cyrene, was ordained Bishop of Ptolemais, though he was at the time as much a Platonist as he was a Christian. But he became zealous to convert pagans to Christianity.

He had a pagan friend, the philosopher Evagrius, who refused to turn Christian, unless convinced of the truth of the Scriptural proverb, *He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, who will repay him.* Synesius at last overcame his doubts, and converted him. Then Evagrius put into his hand three hundred pieces of gold to distribute among the poor; for which the bishop gave him, in the name of the Lord, *a written bond for the money, payable after death.* Evagrius kept the bond carefully, and on his death-bed ordered his family to put it secretly into his hand when they buried him. They did so; and three nights afterwards he appeared in a dream to Synesius, and said, *Come to my grave and take back your note; I have received all, and have written a full discharge on the note.* Synesius had known nothing of the affair; but on inquiry of the family, he learned that the note had been buried with the corpse. On opening the grave, he found the note, with a receipt in full for the money, endorsed upon it in the handwriting of the dead philosopher, who declared that Jesus Christ had repaid the loan which he had given to the poor! The note was afterwards carefully preserved in the church of Cyrene. The story is found in the *Pratum Spiritale* of Moschus. The reader may find it also in Tillemont and in Justin's Remarks, A. D. 410.

at their conduct. It is true, we admit, that the Roman Catholic priests have always made a great deal of money by saying or singing masses—that is, offering sacrifices and prayers—for the dead; and they have taken fees for this charitable service from even the poorest of men. But then, have they not a right? Are they not priests of the only true Church? And have they not power to pray souls out of purgatory? At least we can make bold to affirm that the Bonzes had no such power.

The famous missionary, Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, and the first who went to Japan, is still more severe on the Bonzes. In one of his epistles from Japan, he says:

“ They are so shamefully given to all sorts of crimes, especially to sodomy, that they openly avow the practice; and instead of blushing, when reproved by Christians for using men as women, they answer them with scoffing and ridicule. They have in their monasteries many young and handsome sons of the nobility, sent there to be educated; these they abuse in the flower of their age. Some of the Bonzes resemble [Roman Catholic] monks, in keeping their heads shaved, and in wearing grey clothing. These are more lax than others in their discipline. They have nuns of the same order, with whom they live. All reports agree that when these women become pregnant, they procure abortion by the use of drugs.”*

St. Francis Xavier, who told these things is almost divine authority; for, on account of the miracles which the Jesuits reported that he had wrought in the far East, the Pope of Rome canonized him, that is, made him a worshipful saint in heaven, to succor those on the earth who should pray to him.

It appears from the foregoing passage from his letters, that the Boodhist monks in Japan, as in other countries, conducted the education of youth. But we must intimate a little doubt, whether he is correct in saying that they generally abused the sons of the nobility in the shameful manner charged; for although a Dutch

* See Commentaries of the Jesuits on the affairs of India and Japan, quoted by Hospinian, *De Origine Monachatus*.

writer* charges the nobility themselves with the same crime, they would hardly allow their sons to be so abused. That some of the Bonzes kept catamites is, however, credible enough; for when men outrage nature in one way, by refusing a lawful indulgence to a constitutional appetite, they are very apt to outrage it also in some other abominable way, as these Bonzes were charged with doing, and as many a Roman Catholic priest and monk has done.

But enough: we will close this long chapter with the remark, which the reader has, no doubt, already made, that the facts detailed in it are very curious and interesting; and exhibit a resemblance between Boodhism and Romanism, which is too close to be accidental, and sufficiently important to deserve farther investigation.

CONCLUDING NOTE.

Since the time of Kempfer, little has been added to our knowledge of Japan. The best general account is by Von Siebold, a learned German. But all the late information, obtained through the Dutch traders, amounts to so little in respect to the religion of the country, that Kempfer, now about one hundred and fifty years old, is that from which we have drawn most of the preceding statements.

* Caron in his account of Japan.

CHAPTER IV.

MONACHISM AMONG THE MAHOMETANS.

As Mahomet arose about 600 years after Chirst, of course neither his doctrine nor his followers could have any thing to do with the origin of monachism among either heathens or Christians. On the contrary the Mahometans derived their ascetical notions and practices from the Christian and heathen nations amongst whom they found them.

Our motive for inserting a brief account of the monkish superstitions and fanatical penances of the Mahometans, is to show how these things operate upon mankind under every system of religious belief.

All the Mahometan nations have religious orders among them; that is, either monks, in the full sense of the term; or certain classes of devotees, who affect an ascetical austerity of manners, and claim on that account an extraordinary degree of sanctity, and often a divine gift of working miracles.

Niebuhr, the celebrated traveller, says that the Sunnites—the Mahometan sect to which the Turks belong, are known to have among them a great many religious orders; the members of which are distinguished by the name of Dervishes and Santons, and are discriminated from one another by a diversity of dress and manners.

“In Arabia the Dervishes are professors of the Occult Sciences, or Magic and Miracles. The highest of the sciences is called

Ism Allah. It enables its professors to discover what is passing in the most distant countries, to make themselves familiar with genii (a sort of spirits) ; to oblige them to obey their will ; to dispose of the winds and seasons according to their pleasure ; to cure the bites of serpents, and many other diseases. Persons who have gone far in the study of this science, have attained, as there are (pretended) instances to prove, to a facility of performing their prayers at noon in the Caaba of Mecca without going out of their houses at Bagdat or Aden."

"The art of procuring sublime visions is not unknown to these Arabians. They use the same means that are employed by certain societies in Europe. They shut themselves up for a long time in a dark place, without eating or drinking, and continue to repeat their prayers aloud till they faint away. After recovering from the swoon and leaving the cave, they relate what they have seen in their trance. The common pretences are, that they have seen God in his glory, angels and spirits of all sorts, heaven and hell."

"The second sort of these sciences, called Simmia, is not of so exalted a nature. Although the most sensible of the Mahometan clergy disapprove of this science, some orders of Dervishes, however apply themselves to it, and practice it, in order, they say, to prove the truth of their religion and the sanctity of the founder of their order. These pretended miracles are often performed at Bosra, where I have seen (says Niebuhr) a company of Dervishes of the order of Bedredde walk about all day in the streets, leaping and dancing, beating the drum, and making gesticulations with sharp-pointed irons, which they seemed to strike into their eyes."

"In the same city I was present at a festival, which the Dervishes of this order celebrate every year. The scene was in the open air and in the court of the mosque, which was illuminated with only three lamps. Several Mullahs and Dervishes began with singing some passages out of the Koran. They continued to sing with the accompaniment of some drums ; and during the

music, the other Dervishes arose, took the sharp-pointed irons, and did as if they were piercing their bodies, and even driving the iron with mallets into their flesh. Next appeared the principal actor ; who, assuming an air of inspiration, directed the music to proceed, and to be raised to higher animation, in order to assist his enthusiasm, or rather to stan the ears of the spectators. In his ecstasy he threw up his turban in the air, loosened his hair (for this order of Dervishes wear their hair) and pierced his body with five lances ; then mounting a low building by which a pole sixteen feet long and pointed with iron had been set up, he impaled himself upon the pole, and was carried in this condition through the square."

"It was an affecting sight to see a lean man with a long beard and disheveled hair, wounded all over with spikes, and then carried about spitted on a pole. As I went away, I said to a Mullah of my acquaintance, that the Dervish performed his tricks by means of a wide belt which he carried in his drawers. The Mullah replied that he had suspected some such art, but avoided mentioning his suspicions, lest he should draw upon him the enmity of the order of Bedredden."

The science of Kurra teaches to compose billets which secure the wearer against the power of enchantment, and against evil accidents of all sorts. These billets are enclosed in small purses of skin and worn about the body. They are likewise bound upon the necks of horses and asses to give them an appetite for their food and to tame them when unmanageable. In the city of Diarbekar a billet of this sort put an end to a troublesome croaking of frogs. A man of eminence at Aleppo distributed every year, gratis, billets for freeing houses from flies. The efficacy of these billets depends upon the day, the hour, and the particular condition of the messenger sent to ask for them. Old women continue to use them, however after they fail ; being simple enough to suppose always, that some of the conditions necessary to their efficacy have been wanting, when they were unsuccessful. These billets are at least no worse than those for making hens

lay eggs, which were publicly sold by a Jesuit in the middle of the eighteenth century and among enlightened nations.”*

These extracts from Niebuhr show what imposters the Dervishes of Arabia are.

But of all the Mahometans the Turks have among them the greatest number and variety of religious orders. They are little behind the Roman Catholics in this respect. Monkish saintship is in great credit among them.

Bartholomew Georgiwicz, a writer of the sixteenth century, says, as quoted by Hospinian, that among the Turks, the first order of their monk-saints have no property, go almost naked and torture themselves. Another sort wear their privy parts loaded with a ring of three pounds weight, to preserve their chastity. A third sort stay in the mosques, naked; fasting and praying for the revelation of future events.

John Cuspinian, a German, who died in the year 1529, wrote a history of the Turks, in which he describes their religious orders substantially as follows:

Some go naked, except a small covering over their privy parts. They seem to be insensible to suffering, exposing themselves alike to all weathers, and bear with indifference the laceration of their skins. Some profess absolute poverty, think nothing of earthly things, and lay up nothing for the morrow. Some live for days without food or drink. Others observe perpetual silence, refusing absolutely to speak on any occasion. Some profess to have visions and revelations; others to have supernatural raptures and trances.

The different orders of Dervishes are distinguished by marks and badges. Some wear feathers on their heads, to denote that they are given to meditations and revelations. Others wear earrings, in token of their obedience to the spirit, by which they are frequently ravished. Others signify the violence of their ecstasies by wearing chains about their necks. Others again represent

* Niebuhr's Travels, ch. cxxx.

their poverty by wearing garments composed of variously-colored rags and patches.

They have also different modes of living. Some mix with other men : some live separately in convents or villages of their own ; but the greater number live in the woods and deserts as anchorites, or in the cemeteries, where they subsist on the alms of the people who visit these cities of the dead.*

The Dervishes do not observe all the rules and customs of their religion ; for many of them reject marriage as unholy, use no ablutions, and observe not the stated hours of prayer. But these wifeless Mahometan saints are not always destitute of human comfort. Some female devotees secretly mix with them, and say that the children which they bear, were miraculously conceived, without human agency. These children of professed virgins are called *Nefesogli*. Two of these unbegotten men, in the city of Brusa, were reported to expel demons by means of their hair or their clothes ; it being supposed—not without reason—that men supernaturally born must be supernaturally endowed.

All these votaries of an ascetic religion, are venerated as great saints, preservers of the kingdom, and special friends of God and Mahomet. They are of the opinion that the law is profitable ; but that grace is sufficient for salvation without obedience to law. But they do not argue in support of their opinion ; they prove their doctrine by working miracles. Precisely so did the ancient monks of Christendom prove the divine origin of monkery and monkish opinions.

But there is another sort of Turkish monks called *Czofilar*, because they devote themselves to meditation and other spiritual exercises. These are deemed successors of the prophet and fathers of the Sunnite sect, to which the Turks belong. They possess great authority, alleging in support of their opinion the tradition of the fathers. They assert that men are saved by merit

* The Turkish cemeteries are remarkable for their extent, and their large, costly monuments, some of which are roomy enough to serve as tenements for the living.

without grace or law, by giving themselves to certain forms of prayer, spiritual exercises, watchings, and beggings.* They pray continually. By night they assemble, and seating themselves in a circle, they repeat for some time the words, *La Illah Illahah!* moving their heads in concert. Then they often repeat the word *Lahu!* and then *Huhu!* until they fall down from exhaustion and sleep. These are venerated chiefly by men who value themselves on the antiquity and nobility of their families. So far we follow Cuspinian.

Antonine Menavin, a writer of the same century on the religion of the Turks, says that their monks are chiefly of four orders. There were many others; but on account of their singular wickedness, they were all reduced to four. Those of the first order are clothed in a lion's skin, and generally carry a book in their hands. Those of the second order make a vow of chastity and keep it, though often with reluctance, says Menavin. The third order live by begging. The fourth go with a shaved head, and are utterly illiterate and rude. Menavin says that these are a sort of crafty impostors; that some of them are vagrants at large; some lay snares for women, and the rest devote themselves to gormandizing. It is evident that Menavin had a very bad opinion of the Turkish ascetics.

In the year 1503, a fanatical dervish attempted to assassinate the Turkish Sultan, Bajazet the Second; for which the whole order was for a time banished from the Turkish dominions. Knolles in his history of the Turks, gives, in his peculiar style, the following account of the affair.

“Bajazet departing thence, upon the way met with a dervisher, (which is a phantasticall and beggarly kind of Turkish monks, using no other apparell but two sheepskins, the one hanging before and the other behind,) a lustie, strong, fat fellow, attired after the manner of his order, with a great ring in each ear, who

* In these notions they agree with the ancient Christian monks. Monkery is founded chiefly on the supposed merit of such things.

drawing near unto Bajazet, as if he would of him have received an alms, desperately assailed him with a short scimitar, which he had closely concealed under his hypocritical habit. But Bajazet, by the starting of the horse whereon he rid, (being afraid at the sudden approach of the hobgoblin,) partly avoided the deadly blow by that traitor intended."

This treacherous attack induced Bajazet to banish the whole order. The history of Christian monkery is not without examples of the same murderous fanaticism—as in the case of Ravallac, the desperate monk, who, in the year 1610, under a supposed or pretended impulse of the Holy Spirit, assassinated the great and good King Henry IV., of France.

The fullest and most distinct account, that we have seen, of the religious orders of the Turks, is contained in an anonymous French work on the manners and usages of the Turks, published in Paris in the year 1747.*

The author justly supposes that the founders of monastic orders in Turkey imitated Christian models. He remarks, that the Turkish annals say nothing of monasteries before the year of our Lord 1325, when the Turkish dominions were still confined to Asia; and that at first the Turkish monks lived very austere, like those of Christendom in the early ages. But fanaticism and extravagance corrupted their institution. Now (says he) they seem to think that the fur and white dress which they wear, is a sufficient mark of their sanctity. Some are married and keep shops; others practice celibacy.

The author describes eight distinct orders of Mahometan monks, the most of which are found in Turkey. We shall give from him the names and leading characteristics of these orders, inserting, as we proceed, some things from other writers.

1. *The Menelevis.*

These are so called from Meneleva, their founder. They affect

* *Mœurs et Usages des Turcs*; 3 vol., 4to. The account of the Religious Orders is in vol. 1, book ii., ch. vii.

to be patient, humble, modest, and charitable. Some of them benevolently carry water through the streets for the poor. Before their superiors and before strangers, they maintain a profound silence. They go with their heads bowed, eyes downcast, and backs bent. Their habit is generally a large brown cloth of camels' hair, with a leathern girdle. They keep their legs and breasts uncovered. They often burn their breasts with a hot iron. They fast every Thursday.

These are the famous dancing dervishes. Every Tuesday and Friday they have a sermon in their mosques on a text of the Koran ; and after sermon, some of them whirl round like a top, to the sound of a flute. When the flute stops, they stop instantly stock still, as if they had been suddenly converted into statues. They practice this whirling dance, in imitation, they say, of their founder, Meneleva, who thus whirled incessantly for the space of fourteen days, while his companion Hamze played the flute. He then fell into an ecstasy, in which he received wonderful revelations, and directions for the establishment of his order of monks.*

Bell, who travelled in Asia about the year 1715, witnessed the worship of these dervishes.

" They are" (says he) " a religious order, who have a mosque in Pera [a suburb of Constantinople.] The mosque is built in a circular form, with a pulpit for the mullah and a gallery for the music. The sermon being ended, the musicians began to play on instruments like flutes and hautbois ; upon which five of the dervishes stood up and danced round the mosque in a frantic manner, turning themselves round as they advanced with so quick a motion, that their faces were scarcely distinguishable from their heads. They followed each other at certain distances ; but an old man of eighty years outdid all the rest in quickness of turning : yet, when he left off he did not seem to be at all discomposed by the violence of the motion. This extravagant sect make vows of poverty and chastity, and are held in great esteem by the devout."

This order of dervishes had formerly, and may still have, regu-

* Moreri, Grande Dictionnaire Historique. Article, Dervis.

larly organized monasteries, and a general superintendent, who resided in the monastery of Coigni, in Natolia. They had numerous monasteries in the several provinces of Turkey.

Whilst, like Christian monks, they profess poverty, chastity, and obedience, they have a very reasonable provision for weak brethren. If one finds himself unable to continue his vow of chastity, they permit him to return to the world and marry like an honest man. What an amount of impurities and disorders would have been avoided among the Roman Catholic monks and clergy, if they had adopted this salutary rule, inculcated by St. Paul, (1 Cor. vii. 9) and obeyed by the Menelevis !

There is a remarkable extravagance of the Egyptian dervishes. They have (says Moreri) assigned a place in Paradise to the horse of their Saint Chederlé, and to several other meritorious beasts ; to wit, the camel of Mahomet, the ram which Abraham sacrificed instead of his son Isaac, the heifer of Moses, the ant of Solomon, the parrot of the Queen of Sheba, the ass of Ezra, and the dog of the Seven Sleepers. Some say also the ass of the Messiah ; but others doubt this, seeing that Ezra's ass was already in Paradise. But the Roman Catholics of the Middle Ages did not forget this worthy Christian ass. They celebrated in France an annual festival to his honor. Among the worshippers in the church on the solemn occasion, was a living representative of his long-eared saintship. After mass, they sung a funny Latin hymn to his praise, and concluded the service by three rounds of hearty braying. Whether the four-footed ass joined in this act of devotion, we know not, but the priest led in this as in other parts of the service.* We take him to have been the chief ass among them.

The elegant Busbeque, in his Letters from Turkey, written about the year 1560,† relates some things of these monks that may amuse the reader. We have translated the following extract from his Letters :

* For an account of this Feast of Asses, see Du Fresne, *Glossarium*, Article *Festa Afinorum* ; and Michelet's *Hist. of France*, B. 4, ch. 9.

† Busbequii *Legationis Turcicae Epistolae*.

“ At Theke Thioi the Turkish monks, called dervishes, have a great house. We learned much from them concerning a certain hero named Chederlé, of great mental and corporeal fortitude ; who, as they fable, was the same as our Saint George ; and they ascribe to him the same actions, namely, that he saved a virgin from a huge dragon by killing the monster ; to which they add many things of their own invention, as, that he was accustomed to travel to distant shores, and came at last to a river whose water conferred immortality on those who drank of it. But they do not say in what part of the world this river is to be found—unless, perchance, it be in Utopia. They affirm only that it is hidden by gloomy clouds and darkness, and that it was never revealed to any mortal’s sight except Chederlé’s ; that Chederlé and his elegant horse, being here freed from the laws of death, wandered through the world, giving aid to the injured party engaged in war, or to the distressed who implored his help, of whatsoever religion they might be. What makes the story more ridiculous is, that they hold him to have been a companion and friend of Alexander the Great. For the Turks, disregarding chronology, confound and mix up everything in their stories.” We may add to this remark of Busbeque’s, that the Christian romancers of the Middle Ages were often quite as regardless of time and space, when they mixed up their stories of love and heroism, sorcerers and giants. But let us resume the narrative of Busbeque.

“ The marble fountain of pure water which is in their mosque, they pretend to have originated from Chederlé’s horse, that shed his urine there. They tell many stories also of Chederlé’s companions, and of a niece of his. They show their sepulchres in the neighborhood ; at these they pretend that great benefits are conferred on those who invoke their aid. They pretend that even the stones and gravel on which Chederlé stood, when he watched the dragon, were, if taken in one’s drink, a remedy against fever, headache, and sore eyes.”

Thus it appears from Busbeque that the Turkish monks imbibed from their Christian models the monkish spirit of romancing,

and the practice of invoking the help of dead saints, as well as of ascribing miraculous cures to their relics.

Busbeque relates another story, which shows that they had also borrowed the art of imposing pretended miracles of living monks upon the credulous multitude.

Speaking of a certain monk, he says—"He walked with a coat and a white robe flowing down to his feet, his hair loose, and his whole person much like our pictures of the apostles. Under a fair face he concealed the soul of an impostor; but the Turks venerated him as a great wonder-worker. They got my interpreters to fetch him to me, that I might see him. He dined with me soberly and modestly. He then went out into the yard, and presently returned, carrying a large stone, with which he inflicted blows on his naked breast, sufficient to have felled an ox. He then took out of the fire a piece of iron prepared for the occasion, and now red hot. This he inserted into his mouth, and turned it about there for some time, making the saliva hiss with the heat. The piece of iron was oblong, and square at the thicker end, which he had put into his mouth, glowing like a live coal. When he had done, he put the iron back into the fire, saluted me and left the house, after having received a gift. One of my servants affirmed that it was all a trick; that the iron was not really hot; and, to confirm his opinion, he laid hold on it by the end which stuck out of the fire. But he was severely burnt, and then ridiculed by the others, who asked him whether the iron was hot."

"The same monk told me at dinner, that the abbot of his monastery, renowned for sanctity and miracles, used to spread his cloak upon the water of a lake by the monastery, and getting upon it, to sail pleasantly over the lake; and that he would dress a mutton, ready for roasting, and tying the fore legs to his arms, and the hind legs to his own legs, he would go with it into a hot furnace, and stay there until the mutton was roasted. These stories I believe were false; but the feat with the hot iron I saw; but I have no doubt that when he went into the yard, he fortified his mouth with a liquor that secured it from injury."

So far Busbeque. The feat with the hot iron does not exceed the power of jugglery; nor does that of the roast mutton transcend similar actions by some fire-kings of the nineteenth century. As to the real miracle of sailing upon a cloak, this was stolen by the Turkish monks—impostors as they are—from the Roman Catholic breviary or prayer-book. Some fifty or sixty years before Busbeque's embassy to Constantinople, the Italian monk, St. Francis of Paula, sailed over the boisterous strait of Sicily, where Charybdis whirled and Scylla howled—*upon his cloak*. There can be no doubt of the fact, or it would not have been inserted in the bréviary. Many such miracles of the monk-saints are found in this great prayer-book, mixed with lessons of Holy Scripture,—all read to the faithful with equal solemnity, and all to be received by them with equal reverence, as the dictates of Holy Mother, whose word is infallible. But let us return to our Menelevis.

They sometimes procure ecstastic visions by intoxicating themselves with opium or spirits of wine. In this, however, they are not singular. Their cloisters are dispersed over the provinces, and serve as inns for their members, who travel a great deal as pilgrims and as spies. These sacred buildings sometimes also conceal ladies of pleasure. The Grand Vizier Kuprili had one torn down at Adrianople, because he discovered that it was no better than a bawdy house. But we have said enough of the Menelevis, the most important and most regular of the Turkish monks. The other orders will be dismissed with brief notices.

2. *The Ebibuharis.*

These devote themselves to constant meditation and prayer, with fasting. They aim to abstract their souls from earth, and by holy devotion to participate in the glory of heaven. Being thus purified and abstracted in spirit, they deem the holy place of Mecca to exist in their cells, as much as elsewhere, to them. Still they are regarded as a sort of heretics, for not taking their

bodies, as well as their spirits, on pilgrimage to Mecca, like other believers.

3. *The Nimetulahis*

These assemble at night to praise the divine Unity with songs. Candidates for membership in their order, pass forty days in a chamber, taking but three ounces of nourishment daily. During this retreat, they say that they see God face to face, and that all the glory of Paradise is revealed to them. When the period of their seclusion is expired, the other brethren take them into a meadow, and dance around them. If, during the dance, the novice has a vision, he casts back his cloak and falls upon his face, as if thunderstruck. Then the Superior comes and prays over him. When the visionary comes to himself, he raises his red, wandering eyes, and for a long time has the appearance of an idiot or a drunkard. Finally, he communicates his vision to the Superior, or to some other wise person, who understands the mysteries of religion. From these facts, the reader can perceive the spirit of the Nimetulahis.

4. *The Kadris.*

The Kadris place their religion in macerating their bodies, and in working themselves up to a divine fury. They go stark naked, except a clout about their loins. They join hands and dance in a ring for hours, or even a whole day; incessantly repeating vehemently one of the names of God, until, like men seized with a fit of madness, they fall to the ground with their mouths foaming and their bodies dripping with sweat. Enough of them.

5. *The Sejahs.*

Have monasteries, yet they are vagabonds. They go forth to collect money and provisions, like the Romish beggar-monks; and never return, until they have obtained the quantity required by the Superior, when he sends them out on a mission of beggary.

These monks have a peculiar way of begging. When one of them enters a city, he repairs to the market or some other place where multitudes usually collect. Choosing a conspicuous station, he bawls out with all his might—Oh, God, send me so many crowns, or so many gallons of rice! When a holy man begs so lustily of God, pious men are apt to think themselves called on to answer the prayer. Having received their contributions here, the devout beggar-monk goes in quest of another crowd.

Many of these vagrant beggars are found in Hindostan; but they wander over all Mahometan countries. They do not depend solely on the begging prayers just mentioned. They practice the art of story-telling, to amuse the people. Thus they often gain money where the other method would fail.

When Solyman the Magnificent was reigning over the Turkish Empire, the Great Mogul of India sent an embassy to offer him assistance in his wars. The Grand Vizier, Kuprili Mustapha, sent back for answer, that the greatest favor which the Great Mogul could do the Turks, would be to keep his Fakirs or beggar-monks, at home.

6. *The Edhemis*

Are so called after the name of their founder, Ibrahim Edhem, who spent his time in the mosques, humbly bent to the ground, reading the Koran and praying to God. His domestics and others so admired his piety, that they imitated his example, and thus an order of monks arose. They renounce the business and pleasures of the world, and live an austere life of fasting, prayer, and solitude. Most of their monasteries are in Persia.

7. *The Bektachis.*

Hadji (that is, Saint) Bektach, famous for miracles and prophecies, gave his name to this sect. They can scarcely be called monks, for they marry and live in towns among the other citizens. But they are bound to take long journeys to distribute to all whom they meet copies of the *Gazelle*, a pathetic song, allegori-

cally applied, like Solomon's Canticles, to divine love,—and the *Elma*, that is, one of the names of God, of which they have one thousand and one.

Their worship consists mainly in crying Hu! hu! Let him live! Let him live. But as they do not observe the regular hours of prayer, they are considered to be a sort of heretics. In our opinion, Hadji Bektach founded a very silly and very fantastical sect.

8. *The Santons.*

Their maxim is, *To-day is ours—To-morrow his who shall enjoy it.* Hence, contrary to other sects, they abandon themselves, on principle, to licentiousness and debauchery. Their object is present pleasure. They will give anything to satisfy their appetites, and they consider the tavern as holy as the mosque. On the principle that God made us for enjoying the good that is before us, they pretend that they serve God as well by disorderly and sensual lives, as others do by fasting and bodily mortification. Yet they profess to be religious men! They pass their lives in pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Bagdat, Damascus, and other holy places. But these hypocritical pilgrimages are in reality expeditions of brigandage. They haunt the road-sides, watching for travellers, whom they will plunder when they can, either by sturdy begging or by sturdier violence.

The sanctity of some of them consists in acting the fool, that they may attract attention; gazing steadfastly at the moon; talking proudly, and quarrelling with those whom they meet.

They generally go with head and legs naked, and the body covered with the rough, dirty skin of some wild beast, with a girdle of skin about the loins, and a pouch hanging by the side. Some, instead of a girdle of skin, wear a serpent-like coil of copper, which their doctors give them as a mark of knowledge. They carry a sort of club in their hands, which they flourish with an air as they go.

The Santons of India, who pass through Turkey on their pil-

grimage to Mecca and Jerusalem, demand alms with a sort of contemptuous smile. They walk with measured steps. The little clothing that they have, is exceedingly ridiculous, being composed of rags of all colors, picked up on dunghills, and stitched one over another with coarse twine.

These monks are perfect charlatans. They make a business of selling relics to devotees, to wit, some hairs of Mahomet, and other like precious articles.

Nearly all are impudent hypocrites. They say their prayers aloud in the streets, and especially in the market places. There they are seen from morning till night. The market place may be considered as their oratory, their refectory, their cell, and their convent. If they tire of this mode of life, they have only to put on citizens' clothes, and forthwith they are Santons no more. But few ever quit their idle, vagrant life. Their feigning trade of beggary and saintship gives them certain advantages. They are deemed saints by many, and are secure against taxes and military service. They never want simpletons who are ready to be imposed on by loud professions of sanctity ; and then by practicing quackery, exorcism, charms, and other tricks of the craft, they can never fail of dupes, who will pay well for being cheated by almost any sort of religious impostor.

Concluding Remarks.

All the employments of the Turkish monks are sordid or ridiculous. The Menelevis are mercenary. Of the rest, some live in contemptible indolence : some pass all their days in the highways or at the corners of the streets, looking woefully upon the ground, and receiving whatever alms may be offered without their asking for them. Some walk the streets, clothed in a large sheet, their feet elevated on stilts, a sort of trident in their hands, and their mouths crying aloud, *There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet*. Others run through the streets, carrying a large wallet full of musty bread and putrid mutton, to feed the cats and dogs which have no master :—Poor cats and dogs ! There

are many such in Turkey. Those who have a talent, amuse the people with buffoonery. Others go singing before every door, to the sound of a tambour. Some profess to be diviners and prophets. Others interpret dreams, exercise magical arts, and make certain conjurations, prayers, and exorcisms over the sick. Some affect dumbness and ask alms by signs. Others burn their flesh with a hot iron, or cut it with a razor. The people admire this sort of saints and give them plentiful alms.

The Turks have also their female saints, who generally imitate the Santons. They dance to the sound of the tambour in little mosques of their own. They tell fortunes, interpret dreams, and pray over the sick. The she-dervishes travel from city to city, to amuse the idle, and often to make a traffic of their charms.* Their obedience consists in running about to get money ; their poverty, in taking with all their hands ; and their chastity, in having none. Their slippers are violet, like those of the Jews ; their veils are large, like those of our nuns—says the author of *Moeurs des Turcs* :—They profess to be saints ; and many believe that they are, because they make many loud prayers in public, live unmarried, and follow no useful occupation ! Poor human nature !

* Picard. Ceremonies, &c. Tome iii. des Musselmans.

CHAPTER V.

BRIEF NOTICE OF THE ANCIENT RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHIES OF PERSIA, CHALDEA, AND EGYPT.

THE primary source of monachism was, as we have shown, the ancient religious philosophies of the Hindoos and Boodhists of Eastern Asia. The same fundamental principles of religion pervaded the ancient nations of Middle and Western Asia, and, to a great extent, formed the basis of the Egyptian religion. The origin and early spread of these principles date so far back in antiquity, that even the obscurest of historical traditions fail to reach them. Where, or among what people they originated, or how they came to be so extensively propagated, are questions which cannot be solved. The most ancient records of any heathen religion, are the Vedas of Hindostan. We may reasonably conjecture from these and other signs of remote antiquity, that Hindostan was one of the primitive seats of human civilization, and one of the original fountains of religious philosophy. The only other countries which may claim a rivalry in these respects with the Valleys of the Ganges and the Indus, are Egypt on the Nile, and Chaldea on the Euphrates. It may be, that they all derived the elements of their religious philosophy from their common ancestry, an aboriginal people, who branched off as they spread, and carried with them their patriarchal religion. On this common basis, each of these ancient nations may have built its peculiar mythology ; and thus may have arisen that uniformity of

leading principles, with diversity of doctrine and practice, which afterwards characterized their systems of religion. Commerce and missions may have, in later times, infused some doctrines and practices from the matured system of one nation into that of another, and thus produced a closer affinity between the two ;—such as existed between the Hindoo and the Egyptian systems.

It was from Egypt, Chaldea, and Persia, that the Jews and Greeks derived the principles of their ascetic philosophy, and it was through this philosophy, mainly, that the Church derived those principles of ascetism that led to all the extravagancies of Christian monkery. We purpose in this and some following chapters, to show, by a deduction of facts, that Christian monachism originated from the same principles of heathen philosophy, which had previously given rise to the oriental monachism described in the second and third chapters. Thus we shall account, in a great measure, for the striking similarity which was found to exist between institutions so remote from each other, and apparently so unconnected. If we succeed in this investigation, our Roman Catholic brethren will no longer need, as their missionaries did, to ascribe this similarity to the Devil ; nor shall it any longer seem, as it has seemed to many, to be an accidental coincidence between a heathenish and a Christian institution. It is unphilosophical, if not somewhat impious, to ascribe such coincidences to chance. The same moral causes operated to produce all the monachism in the world. Certain principles of oriental philosophy produced ascetism and monkery in Eastern Asia. The same principles spreading westward, and getting finally into the church, produced the same effects among Christians, which they had before produced among Brahminists and Boodhists.

As seeds of plants do not vegetate, unless circumstances are favorable, so neither do the principles of monkery always produce monkery,—at least not a fully-developed monkery. Sometimes they produce an abortive or stunted growth, where circumstances are mainly but not wholly unfavorable. Thus we shall see that

among some ancient nations, among whom this religious philosophy did in some shape prevail, there was yet no regular or full-grown monachism. Still the operation of the ascetic principles was seen in the religious practices and institutions of the country, or of the sects who professed those principles.

Having thus explained the object of this and some following chapters, we proceed to give some account of the religious philosophy of several ancient nations.

§ 1. *The Religious Philosophy of the Persians.*

The Persians believed in one supreme God, whom they called Mithras. The sun was worshipped as his representative. From the supreme emanated two antagonistical Gods, Oromazd or Hormisdas, author of Good ; and Ahriman, author of Evil ; the former represented by light or fire, and the latter by darkness. Some held that these opposite principles were original and independent beings. Oromazd was spirit ; Ahriman was matter ; which is in itself dark and perverse, while spirit is light and benevolence. This doctrine of two principles is called *dualism*. When these principles are supposed to have originated from Mithras, the supreme God, the system has a trinitarian character, but very different from the Christian Trinity.

The Persians held that God pervades the world as its soul, and that fire or light being the most refined and vivifying element, and penetrating all things, is the representative or rather the element of the mundane soul. They believed in subordinate Gods of different ranks.

The human soul they believed to have pre-existed in a higher state, and to be sent into bodies, to keep up the harmony of nature. Of course they believed the soul to be immortal.

The priests of the Persian religion were the magi, who were of three ranks, the highest of which was the Archimagus or Chief Priest, who presided over the whole body. They rejected the use of images. Zoroaster, or Zerdusht, as the Persians called him,

was the great reformer of the Persian religion. He taught a pure morality.

This very brief notice is all that we deem necessary concerning the ancient Persian religion, which is but obscurely and imperfectly known. A small remnant of its followers is yet found in India. They worship fire as the emblem of God.

From the little that is known of the principles of this ancient religion, we remark the following as belonging to the general system of the east.

1. One supreme God from whom other divine persons emanated. These divine emanations have the actual government of the world.

2. The pre-existence of human souls and the existence of demons.

3. The evil nature of matter, from which proceed sin and misery. Of course the body causes the pollution and suffering of the soul.

The distinguishing doctrine of the magian religion, was its *dualism*, or doctrine of two contending principles.

§ 2. *Sketch of the Chaldean Philosophy.*

The ancient Chaldean Philosophy, like that of Persia, is very imperfectly known. The following appear to have been its leading principles :

1. There is one Supreme God, Father of all, by whose providence the universe was arranged and adorned.

2. Below the Supreme Being are three ranks of spiritual beings superior to man : 1st. subordinate Gods ; 2d. Demons, and 3d. Heroes.

3. Of the class of demons some are evil. These assume the deceitful appearance of gods, good angels, and souls. They are malignant and mischievous to mankind.

4. The inferior gods and good demons or angels, preside over the different provinces of nature, and the several nations of the earth. They govern in subordination to the Supreme God.

5. The Supreme God dwells in inaccessible light, and can be approached only through the mediation of subordinate spirits. This was the universal doctrine of the East. Hence the worship of oriental nations was directed to these subordinate ministers or agents of the unapproachable Supreme. The heavenly bodies were popularly believed to be divine, and as such were worshipped.

6. Matter is the primary source of evil. Hence the Chaldeans, as well as the Persians and Egyptians, held that evil demons became such by being invested with a vehicle or light body, of coarser material than the element of fire or light that clothed the good spirits. Hence they, of course, believed that the human soul became impure and miserable by its imprisonment in a gross earthly tenement, like the human body.

The Chaldeans were famous for their magic and astronomy.

The Chaldean Magic, was at first, nothing but the secret worship of good spirits. It afterwards employed itself in discovering the virtues and effects of natural objects; and was then merely a natural science. It finally degenerated into what has been ever since understood by the term, to wit, conjuration and dealing with evil spirits.

The Chaldean Astronomy consisted at first in the study of the motions and laws of the heavenly bodies. Afterwards it degenerated into judicial astrology, and was closely connected with theurgy or black magic. The stars were supposed to influence the fortunes of men and all the affairs of the world, by their motions, aspects and conjunctions. Especially were the planets supposed to govern the course of human events. By pretended knowledge of these celestial influences, and the virtues of terrestrial bodies, the Chaldean astrologers and magicians undertook to foretell the fortunes of men, and to prepare talismans by which men could ward off all sorts of evil accidents or evil influences.* These pretended arts continued in vogue, until two or three centuries ago.

* Brucker, Hist. Crit. Vol. i., L. ii., cap. ii.

Improvements in natural science have banished all such superstitions and impostures.

§ 3. *Religious Philosophy of Ancient Egypt.*

The philosophy of ancient Egypt agreed with the Hindoo in all its fundamental principles. The agreement is exact and so extensive as to indicate that there was, at some remote period of antiquity, a connection unexplained by history, between the Hindoos and the Egyptians. They both had that singular institution, the division of the people into casts, of which the sacerdotal cast was the highest. But whilst their religions had the same general principles, they differed in their mythology or fables of the Gods, which seem to have been invented long after the primeval dogmas in which they agree, originated.

The Egyptians, like the Hindoos, believed in a Supreme, Original God, whose attributes are unknown, and who exercises no direct agency in the affairs of the world. From this unknown God, emanated three divine persons, called, as Cudworth thinks, Phta, Ammon or Cneph, and Osiris; or, according to Plutarch, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, corresponding to mind, matter, and the world that is composed of these two.*

Among the general principles of the Hindoo and Egyptian philosophies, and adopted from them by some of the Greek philosophers, is the following as expressed by Creutzer.†

“In the Egyptian theology, as in all the oriental theologies, the predominating principle is that of emanation, which consists not only in distinguishing in thought, but in actually separating the divers attributes of the Great Being, the one universal God; so that each attribute becomes a distinct person, and the one God becomes a multitude of Gods. But at the same time, when referred to its source, each Attribute, itself God in God, is thereby alone the whole Godhead, is identical with God. Each divine Emanation, each Person, considered in his highest power, is himself

* Brucker, *Hist. Crit. Phil.* L: ii., cap. viii.

† Guignaut's *Creutzer, Religion de l'Egypt.* Chap. ii.

the Great Being from whom he emanated." The Supreme Original Godhead was considered as unknowable in himself to the human mind, and as revealing his existence and performing his works, only through the Divine Persons who emanated or proceeded from him,—continued in union with his Universal Being,—and constituted essentially but one God in that One Supreme. We shall see this fundamental idea of the Oriental Theology in the Platonic Philosophy of Greece.

Another of the common principles of orientalism was found in the Egyptian Philosophy,—namely, that God is the soul of the world, or that the Divinity resides in nature, so as to be its moving and animating and informing principle, as the human soul is of the body. All separate souls of animated beings were supposed to be emanations from the universal soul, and finally to return into it again. This was also an Egyptian principle.

Another common principle of the ancient theology of the East, is that of the incarnation and consequent suffering of celestial beings, from the highest Divine Person to the lowest of created spirits. Thus the Hindoo Vishnu and the Egyptian Osiris, both Divine Persons of the highest order, become incarnated on earth as men, labor and suffer for a time, die, ascend to heaven, and resume their celestial glory and dominion. Thus, too, inferior Gods are represented as occasionally becoming mortal men in the flesh.

On the same general principle is founded the oriental and Egyptian doctrine, that the souls of men did not begin to exist with the body, but pre-existed as demons or spiritual beings in the upper regions; to which they return, sooner or later, after experiencing the sins and sufferings of mortality, sometimes in one body only, but mostly through a succession of bodies, human or brute, before they ascend to their original abode.

The highest circles of the heavens—that is, the starry regions, are the proper abodes of the Gods. The old Sabeian idolatry, which paid divine honors to the heavenly bodies, was incorporated with the more rational and refined theology, which represents the Gods as spiritual beings, by supposing the stars to be animated by

divine spirits. The Egyptians identified their God Osiris with the sun, as the Persians did their God Mithras. So the Egyptian Isis was the moon. But the Egyptians conceived that their starry Gods descended and became incarnate on the earth,* it is evident that they considered them as being essentially spiritual substances, and separable from the heavenly bodies which they usually inhabited.

In the lower circles of the heavens beneath the moon, and in the atmosphere about the earth, dwell the demons or genii ; some of whom are evil, and those lower in station are inferior in nature as they inhabit less refined elements than the demons and gods above them. According to Diodorus Siculus, the Egyptians conceived the demons to be derived from the soul of the world.

When one of the demons in the higher and purer circles, so far apostatizes from God, as to desire a corporeal life on the earth, he is committed to the care of a guardian genius, or angel, who conducts him to this world, prepares him a body, watches over him during his trials and sufferings as a human soul ; and when these are over, he conducts him again to his native heaven, freed from his earthly predilections, and never more to wander from the seats of the blest.

Material bodies have an evil influence upon the spirits that occupy them. Every human soul contracts defilement from its connection with the flesh. This must be worked off by abstinence from carnal pleasures, and by elevating the mind to divine contemplations and enjoyments. They who in their earthly life become very sinful, are punished in hell for a time. Those who on earth are not sufficiently purified for heaven, but are exempt or released from purgatorial torments, transmigrate into other bodies, until their trials are over.† They may become brutes as well as men, of high or low degree. Those who do not sufficiently purify themselves in the probationary state of man, have to com-

* Brucker, as before cited. He found this doctrine in Diodorus Siculus. L. I. ch. xii.

† Guignaut's Creutzer. Religion de l' Egypt, ch. ii. and v.

plete a course of transmigrations during three thousand years before they are released.*

Matter is eternal and uncreated. Hence its evil nature is incurable ; and the only remedy for the spirits who are involved in it, is ascetic mortification of the flesh during life, and then a release from all connection with mortal bodies.

Ancient authors differ somewhat in their accounts of the Egyptian philosophy. Hence on some points it is difficult to come at the truth. We have followed the best authorities within our reach, and have given for the most part only the views which are least doubtful. Mosheim infers from the various accounts of ancient authors, that the Egyptians differed among themselves on some speculative questions. This is likely enough. Thus much however is certain, that the Egyptian and Hindoo philosophers agreed in all their fundamental principles, and that these principles are directly ascetic in their tendency. If they did not produce the same degree and kinds of fanatical austerities among the heathen Egyptians, before the Christian era, as they did in Eastern Asia, it was because their tendency was counteracted by circumstances into which we need not particularly enquire. We may remark, however, for one thing, that Egyptian fanaticism found sufficient meritorious employment in its brute worship. The sin which a Hindoo would work off by tormenting his body, an Egyptian devotee could atone for by feeding cats or crocodiles while they lived, and embalming them after they were dead. When, a long time afterwards, some of the same principles mixed themselves with Christianity in Egypt, they produced monkery, because there was nothing in Christianity, that could divert a superstitious mind from carrying them out to their legitimate consequences, and there was something in Christianity that would seem to a superstitious mind to lead to the same consequences.

Some of the principles of the oriental philosophy were found to have spread even to the western shores of Europe. The Keltic Druids of Gaul and Britain, believed that demons or spiritual be-

* Brucker. Hist. Crit., L II. cap. vii.

ings presided over the different parts of nature ; that God was the soul of the world ; that human souls were of divine origin, and transmigrated from one body to another.* Some however deny that they taught this doctrine, because they held that there was a Hades or infernal abode for departed souls. This, however, is not inconsistent with transmigration, for the Egyptians and Hindoos held that souls might go to Hell, and afterwards transmigrate.

We have gone somewhat largely into the religious philosophy of ancient Egypt for two reasons : first, because the Greeks derived from that source much of their ascetic philosophy, by which Christianity was afterwards corrupted ; and secondly, because it was in Egypt where this corruption of Christianity began, and where the strange phenomenon of Christian monkery first appeared. Here too was Judaism corrupted by philosophy, and then contributed to the corruption of Christianity.

* Caesar (De Bello Gallico L. vi. c. 14) says the Druids held *non interire animos, sed aliis post mortem transire ad alios*,—which must mean transmigration from body to body.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ASCETIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE GREEKS.

AMONG the Eastern nations of whom we have been speaking, the religious philosophy of the learned might be called the essence, or rational part, of the popular religion of the country, the whole being connected and blended together. But in Greece the systems of the philosophers had little or no connection with the popular system of idolatry. The Grecian philosophers generally either imported their leading doctrines from the East, or formed theories of their own without regard to the old religion of the country.

There are traces of the oriental philosophy in the earliest systems of Greece. The reader will recollect that Egyptian colonies settled in the country at a very early period. It is easy to conceive, therefore, how the seeds of orientalism may have been planted in Greece, before the Grecian sages began to travel eastward for knowledge.

We shall give a sketch of the principal systems of Grecian philosophy, which were more or less imbued with the ascetic doctrines of the East, and served as channels through which oriental ascetism and monkery were communicated to the church.

§ 1. *Orpheus and his Philosophy.*

One of the earliest philosophers of Greece was Orpheus. The

time when he lived is uncertain, but was it probably not less than seven or eight centuries before the Christian era. His history is wrapped in fable, and his doctrines are but obscurely and partially known. They were not transmitted to posterity in a written form, but by oral tradition through the Orphic mysteries or secret school of his followers. Therefore no full account of them was ever published to the world.

His doctrines, so far as known, had so much of the Boodhist character, that some learned men have thought him to have been a Hindoo disciple of Boodh, who had wandered into Greece, and there taught his master's system of religious philosophy. But Diodorus Siculus (b. iv., c. 25) represents him as a Greek who travelled in Egypt, and was there initiated into the religious mysteries. If so, we may easily conjecture that he got his oriental doctrines from the secret school of the Egyptian priests. He adopted in full the ascetic principles of the eastern philosophy.

He taught that all things had their origin in God, who contains and provides for all. Every being emanated from him and partakes of his essence. All souls, as they emanated from him, so they are finally absorbed into him again.

The Supreme God is unapproachable and unknown. Hence the inferior Gods, who emanated from him, are the proper objects of worship. Such is the Orphic doctrine concerning God, as reported by the ancients. It is entirely oriental,—the very same, so far as it goes, with the Hindoo and Egyptian theology.*

Plato says† that Orpheus considered the body as the prison of the soul; and that the general opinion in Greece during those of early times, represented the present life as “a life in the grave—a punishment for previous guilt; whence arises the universal necessity of *penance* and *purification*: while in the future life the just are to receive the rewards, and the unjust the punishment of their deeds.” “Joined with these (says the cautious Ritter)‡

* Brucker. Pars ii., c. i. Orpheus.

† In Phaedro.

‡ Not Carl Ritter, but the author of the History of Ancient Philosophy.

was probably the doctrine of the metempsychosis," or transmigration of souls.

The Platonists asserted that Orpheus also taught the oriental doctrine of demons and heroes ; and the Egyptian doctrines afterwards adopted by Plato, that the stars are animated beings, bright Gods. Orpheus is said also to have introduced into Greece the poetical ideas of the Egyptians concerning Hades, the country of the dead,—its Elysian Fields of bliss for the good, and its hell of torments for the wicked. But Homer had taught these before.

He taught ascetical practices,—abstinence from animal food at all times, and bodily mortifications to purify the soul from sin and guilt ;—also lustrations and ceremonies for cleansing and expiation. Those who were initiated into his mysteries, had to prepare themselves by a course of purifications, and by confession of their sins.

Such were the leading principles of the Orphic philosophy. They bear evident marks of their oriental origin, and are thoroughly ascetic in their character.

2. *Pythagoras.*

He was the greatest of the Grecian philosophers before Socrates and Plato arose. He lived between five and six centuries before Christ. He was reported to have travelled into Egypt and Chaldea, and some say also into India—to gather wisdom. Though born in the island of Samos, he finally settled among the Greek colonies of southern Italy, where he taught philosophy with great success. He founded the Italic sect of Grecian philosophers. His doctrines had great influence in Greece, until Plato and Aristotle arose ; then the Italic sect declined. But a new Pythagoreanism, varying somewhat from the old, sprang up about the time of our Saviour, was embraced by a numerous school in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, and contributed to spread ascetical notions and practices through the countries where monachism first appeared among Christians.

The Pythagorean philosophy was founded on oriental principles, and was decidedly ascetic in its character. Its theology was of the oriental stamp. The following are its leading principles :*

There is one Infinite God pervading nature as its soul, and the source of life to everything that lives.

Next to this supreme God are three ranks of spiritual beings, Gods, Demons and Heroes or Demigods. The last were men, exalted after death for their virtues.

The world is animated, intelligent, spherical : all without the boundaries of this universal system of nature is a void.

There are successive spheres from the centre to the circumference of the world. In the highest resides only the first cause, whatever is nearer to that, is better than the more remote. The sun, moon and stars are Gods. Mortals dwell in our gross atmosphere ; immortals in the pure ether above. The ether is in perpetual motion.

The human soul is a particle of the mundane soul. It is composed of two parts, the one rational, the other irascible and concupiscible ; the former only is immortal, the latter comes from the soul of the world and finally returns to it. The mind or rational soul pre-existed as a spiritual being in the upper regions.

Souls transmigrate from body to body ; not always immediately after death (as Laertius represents the Pythagorean doctrine,) but often after a destined interval in Hades or in the celestial regions. When a soul migrates into the body of a brute, its rational faculties are cramped by a defective organization of its material body.

Pythagoras believed, with nearly all heathen antiquity, that innumerable demons float in the atmosphere and in the ethereal circles above,—some of whom are good, and others evil. These airy beings exercise either a salutary or a noxious influence over human bodies, and cause our dreams. They enter into bodies

* Brucker, *Hist. Crit.* Pars ii. L. ii. c. x. In the huge and sometimes ill-digested mass of this work, we meet with apparently inconsistent doctrines ascribed to the same philosopher.

conceived in the womb, when they find such as suit them, and thus become souls.

Pythagoras adopted the opinion, that the incarnation of souls is a punishment for sins committed in a prior state. Therefore he regarded the body as a penitentiary house of the immortal soul, and as the source of its sufferings on the earth. By its conjunction with that base associate, the animal soul, it is agitated by impure passions, and its intellectual vision is obscured.

Hence the necessity of adopting a strict ascetic mode of life for the purpose of dispelling the clouds from the intellect, and purging the immortal soul from the stains of sin. Carnal desires must be subdued by abstinence, the pleasures of sense must be avoided, and the soul must be elevated by the contemplation of pure entities. By pure entities are meant abstract ideas, which exist independent of matter, and are apprehended by the understanding without the aid of the senses.

The *Moral Rules* of Pythagoras conformed to his philosophical theories. He taught his disciples to abstain from animal food like the Hindoos, and to practice an austere self-denying temperance. He deemed it salutary to inure the body to hardships by adding voluntary sufferings to those which nature imposes.

“The Pythagoreans (says Stanley*) exhorted those who came into their society, to shun pleasure,—for nothing so deceives us and draws into sin as this passion. In general, it seems, they endeavored not to do anything that might tend to pleasure;—this scope or aim of action being, for the most part, indecent and hurtful.”

Pythagoras did not enjoin celibacy upon his followers; but whilst he tolerated marriage as a necessary institution, he endeavored, like the Christian Fathers long afterwards, to reconcile it to his principles by restricting matrimonial indulgence to a point not far from total abstinence. He allowed it only at a certain season of the year, and then rarely.

The spirit of Pythagoreanism is best seen in the establishment

* History of Philosophy, part ix. ch. 2.

and regulations of his *Esoteric School*, or *Secret Association*. To the *Exoteric* or outward disciples Pythagoras taught only plain, simple precepts, suitable to men aiming at only imperfect attainments—and certain mysterious emblems which he did not explain. But the *Esoteric*, or inner disciples, were instructed in the mysteries of philosophy, and trained to the perfection of virtue. The members of this *Secret Association* were bound by an oath, never to divulge what they were taught behind the veil; for Pythagoras concealed himself behind a veil when he lectured to the uninitiated; to the initiated he spoke face to face.

Candidates for membership had to go through a trial of five years. During a part, or the whole of this time, they had to keep an unbroken silence.

All the members lived in common, like Cenobite monks. They might have families with them in the cloister, but no private property or separate table. Their behavior, employments, dress, food, &c., were prescribed by the rules. Their daily exercises were not essentially different from those of a Cenobite monastery. They consisted of worship, study, meditation, and business—partly in society, partly in solitude. Their diet was vegetable, selected and prepared for nutriment, not for pleasure. All stimulating food and drink were avoided. Their dress was plain, white, and clean. In everything they were to exercise temperance and sobriety, to avoid the pleasures of sense, to quell the tumults of passion, and to cleanse the soul from earthly defilements, that it might soar, unencumbered and undisturbed, to the region of pure entities, and of intellectual truth.

It concerns us not at present to mention the scientific studies of Pythagoras, his mystical emblems, or his affectation of mystery and miracle, to gain respect and excite curiosity. We shall only add, that long after his death, his disciples pretended that he had wrought supernatural wonders during his life-time. Such pretences have been too common to excite our surprise. We do not find, however, that any of these reporters, like the apostles, pro-

fessed to be eye-witnesses of what they related, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

The Pythagorean philosophy flourished among the Greeks and exerted a powerful influence, until it was superseded in a great measure by later systems, especially those of Plato and Aristotle. It was revived with some modifications about the time of our Saviour, and flourished again in Western Asia during two or three centuries. Before its first decline, several eminent followers of the great founder taught the system with distinguished success, but with some unessential variations and additions. The greatest of these early teachers of Pythagoreanism was

Empedocles.

He taught that there are two eternal principles, God and Matter,—that God pervades nature as a soul, giving to all life and motion ;—that the human soul is twofold ;—the superior rational part derived from the Divine Soul of the world,—the inferior sensitive part from the physical elements, combining under the natural laws of love and contention—or, in modern phrase, attraction and repulsion. He had the notion, we presume, that the sensitive desires and aversions of the human constitution were but individual actings of this general law of physical love and contention.

He taught, like his great master, that the rational soul is sent into the body for punishment. It assumes bodies of all sorts, animal and vegetable, migrating from one another, until purified at last, it returns to God and becomes itself divine.

Plutarch (*De Exilio*) has preserved some verses of Empedocles, in which he expresses this oriental doctrine. We give a translation.

The Fates ordained, the gods of old decreed,
If long-aged demons sin, they wander far ;
Each suffers pains, an exile from high heaven ;
Through earth he strays, full thirty thousand years.
So now I wander by divine command.

In other verses he represents the demons as being hurled from heaven by the angry Gods, and as driven and tortured by the elements, until purged and expiated by punishment, they are restored to their former nature and place in heaven.

We shall mention the later Pythagoreans hereafter.

§ 3. *The Stoical Philosophy.*

We shall notice this system briefly. It was austere and tended to ascetism in its morality; but its principles differed in some material points from those that were most influential in producing Christian monachism.

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism taught that there were two eternal principles,—Matter, passive,—and the Divinity, active;—that God is a living fire, unlike common fire; he is also spirit; he produces, fashions and permeates all things. He animates the world, as its soul. The human soul is a particle of this mundane soul, but like other individual beings, liable to perish.

All nature is bound fast by the decrees of Fate, and the course of events is unalterably fixed.

The wise man will live conformably to nature. He alone is free. All true happiness consists in virtue. Hence, as man strives in vain against his destiny, and virtue is the only good, pain is no evil, and all external things,—riches and poverty—honor and infamy—health and sickness—are in themselves indifferent.

On these principles the Stoics professed to despise all that the world in general pursues as good or shuns as evil; and wrapping themselves up in the pride of their virtue, to bid a stern defiance even to Fate. Such in brief was Stoicism.

§ 4. *Plato and his Philosophy.*

The philosophy of Plato was that which ultimately gained the strongest and most extensive influence over the minds of men in the Roman empire,—especially during the first centuries of the

* Tenneman's Hist. of Philosophy, Stoicks.

Christian era. Being full of entertaining fancies, and giving sublimer conceptions of the Godhead than other philosophies of the time, it suited the imaginative minds of the East, and did more than all other systems to corrupt the doctrines of the gospel, and mislead the practice of Christians, in the second and third centuries. It had from the beginning a large infusion of Pythagorean and oriental doctrines. By the time that Christianity began to prevail in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, it had in those countries received an additional dose of orientalism, and in its form of Eclecticism and New Platonism, it mixed itself with the Christianity of the age, and aided no little in producing that religious monster—a Christian monk.

Plato lived about 400 years before Christ. He was first a disciple of the admirable Socrates at Athens. He then travelled after knowledge into foreign countries,—particularly into Egypt, where he cultivated acquaintance with the priests, and studied their philosophy. After some years he returned to Athens, and there taught philosophy during the remainder of his days. His lectures were delivered in a public school called the Academy; hence his followers were long called Academics.

His system of doctrines is very extensive and in great part very abstruse. We shall endeavor to give an intelligible sketch of his theological and moral philosophy,—these being the only parts of his system that have an important bearing upon the subject of our present investigation.

According to Plato there are three uncreated principles or substances,—God, Ideas, and Matter. These constitute the primordial Trinity of Plato. It is not a Trinity of divine persons, but of essentially different substances.

The original supreme God, according to Plato and the orientals, is utterly beyond human knowledge, in respect to his nature and his attributes. All that we know of him is, that he is an immaterial being, and the primary source of all that has life, action and intelligence.

In the Infinite mind of the supreme Being exist the eternal Ideas or Forms, after which, as patterns, all created things were made. They are neither material nor spiritual, but nevertheless substantial beings. They exist forever unchanged. They are perfect. They cannot be apprehended by the senses, which perceive only material objects, which are imperfect representations of ideas; as a gold-ring imperfectly represents the abstract idea of a circle. The ideas can be apprehended only by intellect or pure reason; hence they are called *Intelligible Things*, to distinguish them from the *sensible*.

Matter in its primary state was without form, and void of all sensible properties: it was an obscure, indistinct, elementary material; out of which God created the world, by impressing upon it the forms that compose the system of material nature, after the pattern of his eternal ideas.

But as in the oriental theology, so in the Platonic; the supreme unknown God was not the immediate agent in the creation of the world. He employed in this work a divine emanation and image of himself, who is the second God, called by Plato *Demiurge* or Creator,—sometimes *Logos*, meaning word or reason of God, and sometimes simply *The God*. Through his agency also subordinate Gods and Demons were created.

All these intelligent beings were originally pure; but by some means many of the demons became vitiated and malignant.

The more exalted of the Divine Intelligences are invested with the actual government of the world in subordination to the Creator. Their residence is in the fixed stars of the highest heavens. Indeed Plato speaks of the stars as animated beings and gods of fiery splendor. This was the Egyptian doctrine. How far he intended here to speak poetically, and to be understood with allowance, we cannot tell. His rich imagination often led him to invest his doctrines with poetical imagery, so as to make it doubtful to his readers, whether he meant to express facts or fancies, to state his doctrines or merely to embellish them. However, he seems to have seriously taught that every globe of the uni-

verse was an animated being, and that each of the bright orbs which shed so benign a light upon this dull earth, was at least the residence if not the substance of a God.

The good demons who inhabit the space between the starry heavens and the earth, preside over the different parts of nature. They heed the several tribes of terrestrial animals, guard the cities of men, and conduct the operations of nature—all under the authority of the higher powers. They act as mediators between Gods and men. They convey our prayers up to heaven, and bring down messages and blessings from above. This doctrine of mediating demons or angels, between poor mortals here below and the Supreme Powers of heaven, was almost universal in the Eastern world.

According to Plato, therefore, three ranks of beings separate the human species from the Infinite Supreme. 1. The Divine Creator, Father of Gods and men, wholly incorporeal, and so sublime in his nature—though he is but the Image of the Supreme—that he can be but obscurely and partially known by man. 2. The celestial Gods of the starry regions,—the subordinate rulers of the world—of a bright and fiery nature. 3. The demons, who are of an aerial nature, and therefore inferior to the Gods, whose essence is of the finest element in nature. The higher demons about the orbit of the moon, are of a more etherial substance than those who dwell in the grosser atmosphere of the earth. Yet they are all of a finer composition than terrestrial animals, whose spirits are invested with the coarse element of water and earth. Every created spirit, not excepting the human soul, when divested of its earthly covering, is clothed with a vehicle.* The more refined and pure the element out of which this *instrument* of action was made, the more perfect is the spiritual being. This was a common opinion among the ancients.

* *Οχημα* as the Greeks call it. Every finite spirit was supposed to need such a vehicle or body, to give it place and locomotion.

The Demiurge, or Creator—according to Plato's philosophy—endowed this world with a soul, by virtue of which it became an animated being. The mundane soul is diffused through all the elements, and is the source of life, and feeling, and action to all the animated beings of the earth. They derive their corporeal organization and animal souls from this mundane soul.

Thus is completed the second Trinity of Plato : the Supreme, the Demiurge or Logos, and the soul of the world,—all Divine Persons ; but unequal, and derived successively, one from another.

The mundane soul is of a middle nature between Mind and Matter. It is superior to Matter, because it possesses Life, Sensation, and Action or Power ; but it is inferior to mind in not possessing Intellect or Reason.

The lower animals have naturally no souls but those which they derive from the soul of the world. But man has also a rational soul or mind, which pre-existed as a demon in the upper regions. The animal and the rational souls are united by a third principle or soul, which Plato calls *The Irascible*.* The soul of man is therefore threefold. It consists of the Rational Soul, which possesses Reason ; the Animal Soul which possesses Appetite ; and the Irascible Soul which possesses Wrath or Excitable Energy, and serves as a connecting principle between the other two. The Rational Soul or Mind is immortal ; the others perish with the body.

Matter is essentially imperfect and refractory, so that everything formed of it or connected with it, partakes of the natural and insuperable imperfection of the material. Hence the origin of evil. Hence the imperfect nature of the Mundane Soul, and all animal souls ; and hence the defilement of the immortal soul, when it inhabits a material body.

Our animal sensations and desires belong only to the animal soul. Being of an earthly nature, and having relation to the body,

* So the Greek word *θυμος*, is commonly translated. But we agree with Ritter in thinking that the German word *muth*, Spirit or Energy, more nearly expresses Plato's meaning.

they darken and corrupt the rational soul. In its pre-existent state as an incorporeal being, the Mind enjoyed a pure happiness in the contemplation of the divine ideas, which it could then clearly perceive. But when it became immersed in the gross elements of the body, and associated with the animal soul, it became infected with low sensual desires, forgot its former state, ceased to perceive those ennobling ideas, and became a dim-sighted carnal thing of the earth.

The only way in which the immortal mind can recover from the darkness and defilement of its fallen state, is by the enlightening influence of philosophy. It must strenuously resist the debasing influence of carnal desires and evil passions, and devote itself to the pure contemplation of intelligible things. By subduing the sensual propensities, quieting the turbulence of the passions, and abstracting its attention from sensible objects, the soul is able, even in its corporeal prison-house, to disenthral itself in a great measure from the gloom and oblivion of its fallen state, and to recover a portion of those intellectual visions of truth and beauty, which it had enjoyed in its etherial birth-place.

Those who during their mortal life have thus subdued their earth-born affections, and purified the mind by divine contemplation, are exalted after death to the celestial abodes, where a bright star becomes their happy dwelling-place. But those who live immersed in the sensuous desires of the flesh and spirit, are punished after death in the infernal regions, for a period of time proportioned to their degree of sensuality and wickedness: or if their defilement be comparatively small, their immortal souls are condemned to transmigration into bodies of a degraded cast; they become *women* (says Plato), or slaves, or even brutes. Nor shall any who sink, after one life in the flesh, ever rise to their star of glory, until they have, on a new trial, purified themselves from the vices of their carnal state.

Plato was consistent, when he asserted that none of the vulgar class of mankind could attain true happiness in a future state. Their condition and habits subjected them to the dominion of

animal affections ; and being destitute of "divine philosophy," they had no remedy. Alas for the poor working men of the world, if Plato's philosophy had been really "divine." But a sublimer character than the Grecian sage, has taught a far simpler and far diviner philosophy, by which the laboring poor can be saved without dreaming away their lives in abstract contemplation. Faith, hope, and charity will serve them better, than would a Platonic knowledge of "the intelligible."

Plato taught that the *rational* soul has its seat in the head ; the *irascible*, in the breast ; and the *animal*, in the lower parts of the body ;—and that this arrangement indicated the comparative dignity of the several parts of the soul. Virtue he made to consist in the subjection of the inferior parts to the government of reason. Of the four cardinal virtues, he assigned prudence to the *rational* soul in the head ; fortitude to the *irascible* in the breast ; and temperance to the *animal*, below : Justice he considered as the result of a proper union and subordination of all the parts of our nature.

In his moral precepts, Plato did not enjoin any definite system of ascetic discipline. He did not prescribe any specific rules of fasting, continence, poverty, or devotional exercises in seclusion from the world. Such an application of his principles would not have suited his age and country. But it is obvious to remark that his philosophy contains all those principles, which in Eastern Asia brought forth the extravagancies of ascetism and monkery. So, when Platonism became rooted in the congenial soil of Egypt and Western Asia, it gathered to itself more and more of the oriental dogmas, and tended more and more towards the ascetic form in the practice of its professors.*

The foregoing sketch of Plato's philosophy, shows how much

* The foregoing account of Plato's philosophy has been digested from Brucker's and Ritter's Histories of Philosophy, and Apuleius on the Demon of Socrates and on the Philosophy of Plato. For a sketch, taken chiefly from Enfield, see Anthon's Classical Dictionary, article Plato.

he was indebted to Pythagoras and the orientals for the elements of his system. He merely digested, improved, and adorned what others had already taught. What we are chiefly concerned to remark, however, is that by his elegant manner of combining and treating the elements of the oriental philosophy, he made it popular among the Greeks, and gave it prevalence in Egypt and Western Asia, at the time when Christianity began in those countries, to be embraced by learned men and philosophers. Thus his philosophy came to be the chief medium through which the principles of the oriental philosophy were introduced into the Church. Before this came to pass, however, new schools of both Pythagorean and Platonic philosophers had begun to arise in those eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, where the Christian doctrine was first corrupted by philosophy, and Christian monachism originated. It is important, therefore, to give some account of these new schools of Pythagoreans and Platonists, especially of the latter, by whose doctrines the Church was so much influenced in the second and third centuries. This we shall do after we have noticed the earlier philosophy and monachism of the Jews.

CHAPTER VII.

PLATONISM OF PHILO THE JEW.

It was in the great city of Alexandria in Egypt, that the Platonic Philosophy found its most distinguished disciples and teachers after the commencement of the Christian era.

Alexandria had been before, and continued long to be afterwards, the greatest commercial emporium in the world. Here were congregated men of half a dozen nations and religions—Hindoos, Egyptians, Arabians, Syrians, Jews, and Greeks. It was the chief point of contact between the eastern and the western nations: the focus into which their doctrines were collected, and the centre from which they radiated in all directions. Here arose a great university, the greatest in the world after Athens began to decline. In this celebrated school of learning, philosophy, science and literature, were taught by distinguished men. Its founders and early patrons were the Grecian Ptolemies, who, after the death of Alexander, the founder of the city, reigned over Egypt. These enlightened rulers furnished their university with the greatest library of ancient times. It was this great storehouse of knowledge that made Alexandria the chief seat of learning for the space of eight hundred years; until that fanatical disciple of Mahomet, the Caliph Omar, made fuel of seven hundred thousand volumes—on the principle, that if they agreed with the Koran they were superfluous; but if not, they

were pernicious. This was like the water-trial of supposed witches in after times. If they sank and were drowned, they perished as innocent persons; but if they floated on the water, they were burnt as witches.

The Jews constituted, from the foundation of the city, a numerous and wealthy part of the Alexandrian population. Josephus quotes from Strabo the statement, that their quarter constituted a large portion of the city;—that they had a special governor of their own entitled Ethnarch—and that they were a numerous and powerful people in Egypt.* The Ethnarch had also the title of Alabarch. He administered justice among the Egyptian Jews, and had the oversight of both civil and religious affairs.

Here many of the Jews learned the Greek language, and, for the first time in the history of their nation, some of them studied the Grecian philosophy. We should remark that the conquests of Alexander the Great had diffused the language, and in some measure the population of Greece, over Western Asia and Egypt. Greek was thenceforth during many years the language of science, and to a considerable extent also the language of the people, in all those countries.

It was for the numerous body of Jews in Egypt, that the Hebrew books of the Old Testament were translated into Greek, more than a century before the birth of Christ. Many of these Jews had been already, for so long a time, denizens of a foreign country, that they had forgotten, not only the ancient Hebrew, but even the Syro-Chaldaic dialect, spoken in Judea after the Babylonish captivity.

As to this Greek translation of the Old Testament, it was undoubtedly made in Egypt during the reign of the Ptolemies; but the story which Josephus took from Aristaeus concerning the seventy interpreters, is unquestionably fabulous. It obtained from him such currency, however, as to give the translation the title of the Septuagint, or Seventy.

* Josephus. Antiquities. Book xiv. chap. 7.

It is evident from the style and manner in which the different parts were translated, that the work was done by different hands, and probably at different periods of time.

The most distinguished man among the Alexandrian Jews, in the time of the Apostles, was Philo, surnamed Judæus, the Jew. He was brother to Alexander, the Alabarch, and was sent once, by his countrymen, on an important mission to the emperor, at Rome.

He was deeply imbued with the philosophy of Plato ; yet, also, a zealous disciple of Moses. What a conjunction ! Plato and Moses ! There was no affinity between them. How then could the philosophical oil be combined with the water smitten out of Sinai's rock ? As Plato united the rational soul with the animal, through the medium of the irascible, so the philosophizing Jews united Greek Platonism with Mosaic Judaism, through the medium of the allegorical. The ceremonial worldly system of the law, (designed only for a temporary purpose,) would appear to the mind of a Jew, imbued with Plato's idealism, exceedingly dry and uninteresting. He would, therefore, endeavor to find under the hard shell of the literal sense, a nutritious kernel of divine philosophy. In this attempt he could not fail, for he had only to exercise his imagination. He could then find Platonism in the books of Moses, quite as easily as Shakspeare's Jacques could find "Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Philo was not the first Jew who resorted to the allegorizing and spiritualizing method of expounding the Holy Scriptures. Jewish doctors had adopted it to some extent, ages before, chiefly at Alexandria, where the Gentile philosophy began to allure the Jewish mind with its ingenious theories. Of course Judaism then began to be corrupted with Oriental and Platonic fancies, just as Christianity suffered afterwards from the same cause. Whenever religious doctors begin to dive beneath the proper sense of the sacred writings in search of mystical and allegorical senses, they soon lose sight of the firm land, and bring up from the wide abyss of human thought whatsoever may please their

fancies, be it the elegant philosophy of Plato, or the puerile day-dream of Swedenborg.

Philo's works consist chiefly of tracts on certain passages in the books of Moses, and some on other subjects, mostly philosophical. In all these he teaches Platonic doctrines, but not the pure system of Plato. Pythagorean and Egyptian sentiments corrupt his Platonism. The doctrines of Moses constrained him also, in spite of allegory, to deviate, in some things, from the track of the Grecian philosopher. This syncretism, or mixture of doctrinal systems, led Philo into frequent inconsistencies, which have puzzled his commentators in their attempts to reconcile himself with himself, and to make out a clear statement of his doctrines. It would be unimportant to determine what they were, if his fame and his writings had not contributed to infuse heathenish philosophy into apostolical Christianity, and thus to produce errors of doctrine and practice, which Romanism retains in full, and Protestantism in part, and probably will retain for ages yet to come. Especially did his writings serve as a medium, through which ascetical and monkish sentiments passed from heathenism into the Church. We shall, therefore, give a sketch of his doctrines, so far as they relate to our subject, and conclude with a specimen of his allegorical method of interpreting the writings of Moses. We give the result of our own examination of his writings.

1. *Of God and his Chief Powers.*

Philo conceived that there was a substantial, but not a formal agreement between the Platonic and Mosaic doctrines concerning the Godhead. According to both, as he conceived, there is one Supreme God, who creates and governs through the agency of his divine powers. These powers are personal agents, divine emanations from the Infinite Supreme, existing in him, and one with himself, yet, exercising each his distinct agency. They are, in short, the divine attributes personified, not figuratively, but really. They are the powers of God, acting distinctly, yet in union with the Supreme Father.

This is the old Oriental doctrine, the general theory of which is given in our account of the Egyptian philosophy.

In respect to the number and relation of these Divine Powers, Philo differs from Plato, and is inconsistent with himself. He represents them differently in different places. He adopts Plato's doctrine of the Divine Logos or Word, speaks often of this Divine Agent, but so variously and obscurely, that his commentators differ in their explications of his doctrine on this interesting point. One thing is certain, however, that he ascribed Personal Agency to the Divine Logos, though Mosheim thought that he meant by it the "Intelligible world," or Divine Ideas collectively—according to Plato's theology. He adopted Plato's doctrine of a Mundane Soul, from which animal souls proceed; but he does not make this soul of the world one of his Divine Powers, though sometimes he apparently confounds it with the Logos.

We shall confirm our statement by translated extracts from his works; in which the reader will see what his doctrine is, and how inconsistently he presents it at different times.

In his tract *On Abraham*, speaking of the three angels who appeared to the patriarch, he says:

"The middle one is the Father of All, properly-named in the Scriptures, He-that-is (Jehovah.) Those next to him, on either side, are called *The Maker* and *The Governor*. The former of these is called *God*, by whom all things were made and disposed. The other is called Lord;* for it is fit that the creation be governed by the Creator. That Middle One, with his Powers on either side, exhibits to the discerning mind the appearance, sometimes of *one*, sometimes of *three*; of *one*, when the mind is most

* Philo here translates into Greek, and we into English, the meaning of the three Hebrew names of the Supreme Being. (יהוה) Jehovah, He-that-is, commonly rendered Lord in our English Bible; (אֱלֹהִים) Elohim, God; and (אֲדֹנָי) Adonai. Lord or Ruler. These are often used interchangeably in the Old Testament.

accurately cleansed ; of *three*, when the spectator is not initiated in the Greater Mysteries, but labors in the Lesser, and cannot yet comprehend Him, as existing alone and of himself—but as existing in his works as Creator and Sovereign.”

In this passage Philo attributes to the three angels the three Hebrew names of the Supreme Being: the first representing Jehovah, the Father; the other two, the Divine Creator and Divine Ruler of the world. These three appear to the imperfectly-instructed, as three different Gods; but to those who fully understand the Mosaic doctrine, as one and the same God, or Supreme Being. The Heathen Mysteries of the Gods—or Secret Schools—to which he here alludes, were of two degrees; the Lesser, into which the candidate was first initiated, are supposed to have corrected the grosser errors of Polytheism; but the Greater, to have taught the true doctrine of the Divine Unity—namely, that all the Divine Beings who emanated from the Supreme, were united in him, and made with him but one God. This doctrine of Divine Emanations, constituting distinct agents, yet altogether one God in the Supreme, was so prevalent among the ancients in Asia, Egypt, and Greece, that we cannot hesitate to construe the language of Philo in this sense. It is the easiest and most obvious meaning of his expressions.

In his tract *on the Cherubim* (Gen. iii. 24) Philo speaks of the divine Persons or Powers somewhat differently. His text is,—“He (God) placed at the east end of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.”

“Next to the one only true God (says Philo) are two supreme and first Powers, *Goodness* and *Authority*: the universe was made by *Goodness*; the creation is governed by *Authority*. A third that unites the two is *Logos*—*Word* or *Reason*,—in the middle. The Cherubim were the symbols of the two Powers,—the flaming sword, of the *Logos*.”

In the former passage Philo made a divine Trinity; here, he makes a quaternion, by adding the Logos to the primary Power

of the Father ; thus constituting a *Trinity of Powers*, in the Supreme God, according to the Hindoo and Egyptian theology. If in any way the former statement can be reconciled with the latter, we must suppose that three angels represented the three Powers, and that the Supreme God did not appear in either of them. But this is scarcely feasible : so that we must give up Philo as inconsistent in his theology.

As to the Logos mentioned in the latter passage, our learned Jew often speaks of him as a Divine Person in the Supreme God. In his tract *On the Confusion of Tongues*, he calls the Logos, "The First-born of God," "The oldest Angel," "The Archangel of Many Names, who is called The Beginning," "The Name of God," and "The Man after his Image." Elsewhere he calls him "The Image of God," "The Vicar or Vicegerent of God" and his "Minister." He says that the Logos is the seal from whose impression created beings received their forms (which is the Platonic doctrine), and that he is clothed with the world as with a garment, and that by him the creation is held together and sustained ;—which seems to identify him with the soul of the world, though possibly Philo meant not so.

In his tract *On Migration*, he says that the high-priest under the Law of Moses, represented the Divine Logos, whose father is God the Father of All, and whose mother is Wisdom, through whom all things were generated. He seems here to allude to the description of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, chap. viii. 22—31.

We shall quote but one thing more under this head. In the tract *On Dreams*, speaking of the visible appearances of God, he says it was the Logos who appeared to the Patriarchs ; for, says he,—“as they who cannot look at the sun, may see the reflection of his rays ; so we are to understand that it was the Image of God, his word (Logos) and Angel, whom they saw as himself.” Again he says, “God is the primary light ; his Image, the Logos, is also most perfect light, and *similar to no creature*.”

From these various expressions concerning the Divine Logos, our readers may judge for themselves what conception Philo had

of this divine being. In the specimen of Philo's allegorical interpretations, near the end of the chapter, the reader will see that the Logos is represented as God's agent or instrument in the creation and government of the world.

2. *Of Angels and Demons.*

Philo, like Plato and all the orientals, taught that our atmosphere and the ethereal regions above it are full of spiritual beings, some of whom enter into human bodies and become men.

In his tract *On the Giants*, he comments on the text in Genesis vi. 2—4, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair," &c. The Septuagint translation, used by Philo and all the Greek Fathers of the Church, reads *angels* of God instead of *sons* of God, as it is in the Hebrew. On this ground they all held that these lovers of fair women and fathers of Giants were Angels, not men. But according to Philo, the only difference is, that angels have no flesh and blood. For in this tract he says as follows :

"Those whom other philosophers call demons, Moses usually calls angels ; but they are spirits flying through the air. The whole world must in all parts have animated beings ; the other elements, earth, water, air and fire* have theirs ; so must the stars of heaven. These spirits are wholly immortal and divine. The air is full of living creatures that are invisible to us as the air itself. Some of these souls descend into bodies ; the others disdain to be connected with the earth, and are employed as ministers and servants by the Father, the Creator, in administering the affairs of mortals. But the former, descending into the body as into a river, are overwhelmed as in a whirlpool. But some of them by struggling emerge and [after death] fly back to their home in the upper regions. These souls have, in the body, been taught a sublime philosophy. But those who sink, are the souls of men that neglect the wisdom that pertains to the mind, and

* The ancients believed that salamanders lived in fire, as their proper element. Some imagined that they had seen them.

give themselves to carnal things. Now, if you consider souls, demons, and angels to differ only in name, you will relieve the subject of much superstition."

He teaches the same doctrine in other tracts, particularly that *On Dreams*; in which he adds that some souls, after they have once tried the experiment of a corporeal life, become weary of its vanity, and consider the body as a sepulchre; and, therefore, when dismissed at death, they fly up into the ethereal regions and never return; but that others are so pleased with mortal life, that they transmigrate into new bodies after death. It is the spirits who inhabit the grosser parts of our atmosphere, that usually enter into bodies; but the more refined spirits of the celestial regions, prefer to serve God as mediators between him and his sons on the earth; conveying divine messages down and the prayers of the devout up to God.

3. *Of the Human Soul.*

Philo fully adopted the Patonic doctrine that the human soul consists of three parts, the rational, the irascible, and the animal or appetitive. The first is *breathed into us by God* and is immortal. The others, he says, sometimes are made by inferior creative powers—"nature's journeymen," as Shakspeare expresses a similar idea. He says also that the *Nous* or Rational soul generates some of the subordinate faculties, such as sense, voice, and generative power.

In his account, as given above, of God's breathing into us the rational soul, he seems in following Moses to have forgotten Plato. How do the demons get in to be souls—and that too of their own choice,—if the rational soul be an immediate emanation from God's spirit or breath?

4. *The Human Body.*

He always speaks of the body as a burden and a prison of the immortal soul, which enters it as a sojourner from a foreign land; and that it is an act of Divine mercy which releases it from the

gloom and the miseries of its fleshly tenement, and restores it to its native country in the heavens.

5. *Of Virtue.*

He is perfectly Platonic in saying, that virtue is the union of the three parts of the soul under the government of reason.

“The lovers of virtue,” he says in the tract *On Dreams*, “have a hard task to perform in resisting the body and its pleasures, and a hard struggle, besides, against the temptation of external goods, such as riches, honor,” &c.—“The true disciples of Moses exercise continence, frugality, and patience; they disregard wealth, pleasure, and glory; use only sufficient necessary food to keep off famine; are ready to bear all hardships for virtue’s sake; are content with mean clothing, and esteem luxury a disgrace and a reproach. To them the grassy sod is a precious bed, with boughs and leaves for a covering, and a stone for a pillow. The luxurious esteem this a hard life, but the followers of virtue think it delightful.”

6. *Of Ascetism.*

The last quotation is from a commentary on Jacob’s dream, when the patriarch slept in the open air. It is a picture of the ascetic life when not carried to excess. He is fond of calling Jacob the Ascetic. The following extract from the same tract, is expressly to the point:

“Virtue is acquired in three ways—by doctrine (or instruction), by nature, and by exercise (or the ascetic life.) Of these three, the first and last are most easily united; for that by exercise springs from that by instruction. The faculty of hearing is most prompt for instruction; the ascetic power fits a man for striving (against evil influences.)

7. *The Contemplative Life.*

This he considers, as Plato did, the necessary means of purifying the soul. In the same treatise *On Dreams*, he says:

“ The good man, loving a quiet life, delights in *solitude*, shunning vulgar eyes ; not because he hates society, but that he may fly from vice. Wherefore he usually shuts himself up at home, and seldom goes out. To avoid frequent visitors, he prefers a rural solitude, where he may live more sweetly, conversing with the writings of the virtuous dead.”

Again, in the tract *On the Migration of Abraham*, he says :

“ The senses are an impediment to the contemplation of intelligible things. We should therefore close the senses by seeking darkness and solitude.”—“ God gave the mind the power of knowing the intelligible world by itself, but the visible world by the senses.”

Putting all these things together, we find that Philo was an advocate of ascetic discipline and solitary contemplation, and these two things constitute monachism. He was an ardent admirer of the monachism of his countrymen, the Essenes and the Therapeutes, and he wrote laudatory accounts of these monastic sects. He has the credit, therefore, if credit be due, of uniting Platonism, Judaism, and Monachism into a Triad, sacred to all who should be influenced by his writings, among both Jews and Gentiles.

But Philo did not approve of a merely ceremonial and superstitious ascetism. “ If you see one (says he) taking his food and drink at a late hour, refusing to wash and anoint himself, neglecting to clothe his body, lying on the ground without covering, and then priding himself on his temperance, he is not to be admired ; for his exercises thus far are useless vexations. Nor will costly sacrifices, ablutions, rearing of temples, &c., entitle one to be reckoned among the pious. He has erred from the way of piety in placing his sanctity in ceremonies and rich offerings to Him who will not accept them, and in attempts to flatter Him whom no flattery can reach. The truly pious offer sincere sacrifices but are averse from ostentatious services.”—Excellent observations, and a graphic sketch of monkish ascetism, as some individuals seem to have practiced it in his day ; though some Christian

monks, three hundred years after his time, went far beyond his description, in affecting dirt, destitution, and devotion, in order to rid their souls of all corporeal incumbrances and influences.

Finally, we shall give, as we have promised

8. *A Specimen of Philo's Allegorical Interpretation.*

In the treatise *of the Migration of Abraham*, he is commenting on Genesis xii. 1. "*Now the Lord said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from the house of thy father, &c.*"

"God wishing to amend the soul of man (says Philo) first gives him, as an incitement to salvation, migration from three things, the body, the senses, and uttered speech; for you must understand the *country* as a symbol of the body—the *kindred* as a symbol of the senses—and the *father's house*, of speech. Wherefore? Because the body received its substance from the earth,* and will at dissolution again return to the ground from which it was taken, as Moses testifies, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* For he says that it was formed of clay, and when dissolved, it must return to what it was at first. But sense is a *kinsman* and brother of the mind,—the irrational, of the rational,—since both are parts of one soul. But speech is the *father's house*; because our father, the intelligent mind, sows into the other parts its own powers, and bestowing its energies upon them, assumes the care and management of them all. But its dwelling-house is speech, separate from the other buildings. Wonder not then, that he calls the mind's utterance or speech, a house; for God, the mind of the universe, says that the word (Logos) is his house. For Jacob the Ascetic, when he had a vision of him—that is, of the Logos—openly confesses, *This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven*; as if he had said, The house of God is not any of these visible things, nor can be perceived by sense, but is invisible, obscure, and can be appre-

* The Hebrew *Aretz*, and the Greek *Ge*, both have the double signification of *earth* and *country*.

hended only by the soul as a spiritual being. Who can it be then, except the Logos, older than created things, by whom, as a helm, the pilot of the world steers all things, and whom he employed as an instrument in effecting a faultless creation."

And so this Platonizing interpreter of Moses goes on with his fantastical allegories, through many and many a page, conjuring out of the single-minded old Hebrew prophet many a doctrine which he never "dreamed of in his philosophy."

Such were the philosophical opinions current among Jews and Gentiles, and such the Scripture interpretations, by which they were incorporated with revealed religion, during the early ages of Christianity. How then could Christianity escape corruption, as soon as inspired men ceased to be its teachers?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND MONACHISM OF THE JEWS.

Before the Babylonish captivity, the Jews had no philosophy of their own, and were too little acquainted with foreign nations to learn the philosophy of others. They had no speculative opinions; they formed no theories concerning the origin and nature of things; that is, they did not philosophize—they did not reason on the things in heaven or the things on the earth. King Solomon, who married an Egyptian wife, showed some turn for philosophical pursuits. But in general the only question that divided their religious sentiments was, whether they should serve God according to the precepts of Moses, or Baal, according to the custom of the Canaanites.

Their residence in Babylonia gave them some knowledge of the Chaldean philosophy. The conquest of Babylon by the great Cyrus, brought many of them into contact with the Magian religion. When they had again filled their own country after their restoration, the settlement of many of them in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Europe, softened their prejudices against everything foreign, taught them the languages of the Gentiles, and opened their minds to the admission of new ideas and opinions.

The effect of these circumstances became visible in some of their subsequent writings, and in the rise of religious sects—indicating freedom of thought and a disposition to form opinions.

Some of the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament bear

evidence of an incipient intermixture of the Gentile philosophy with Scriptural Judaism.

Thus the Apocryphal book called *The Wisdom of Solomon*, written in Greek, probably by an Alexandrian Jew, exhibits evident traces of Pythagorean and Platonic doctrines. In chap. i. 7, the author says, that “*The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world, and containeth all things* [συνεχει παντα];” which are Platonic phrases concerning the soul of the world. Again, in chap. vii. 22—29, the author gives a description of wisdom, in which he utters several Platonic notions, making her a personal emanation from God. He says she is “*The worker of all things* ;”—that in her is “*An understanding spirit, holy, only-begotten, subtle, lively, clear, &c., —having all power, overseeing all things, going through all understanding, pure and most subtle spirits.*” She is “*the breathing of the Divine power, a pure emanation* (απορροια) *from the glory of the Omnipotent ;—the brightness* (or *effulgence*, απανγασμα,) *of the everlasting* (or *invisible*, αιδιου) *light,—the unspotted mirror of God’s power, and the image of his goodness.*” All these expressions are conformable to the oriental doctrine, that Divine Wisdom (εννοια) was a certain substantial power, eternal and immutable, which they called Aeon (αιων), and which flowed or emanated like a ray of light from the fulness (πληρωμα) of the Omnipotent God.* Again in chap. ix. 15, the author speaks of the body “*pressing down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighing down the mind that museth upon many things,*” which is the oriental and Pythagoreo-Platonic notion of the body’s being the prison of the soul and darkening the intellect. In the preceding chap. viii. 20, the author says, “*I was a witty child and had a good spirit ; yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled :*” which is the oriental doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul as a demon or spirit, before it came into the body.

This book was written, it is supposed, in the time of the earlier Ptolemies, long before the Christian era.

* Brucker. Hist. Crit. Period. II. Part. i. L. ii. c. i.

The Jewish Sects were chiefly three, the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes.

The fundamental difference between the Sadducees and Pharisees, was, that the former professed to take the written Law of Moses, literally interpreted, as the rule of their faith and practices, while the latter followed the Tradition of the Elders, or in other words, the authority of the Doctors of former times, as the true expounders of the Law. The Sadducees would not admit anything to be Law or Doctrine, which was not expressly taught in the Books of Moses. Hence they denied the immortality of the soul, and—strangely, we think—the existence of angels or incorporeal spirits. The Pharisees—like our Roman Catholics—took the Scriptures in the sense of the Fathers, and received as of Divine authority, whatsoever doctrines and practices, the ancient Rabbis or Doctors delivered as such. If they were not contained in the Sacred Records, they were considered as transmitted from Moses and the Prophets through *Oral Tradition*, and therefore of the same authority as if they had been written by inspired men.

With the Sadducees our subject has nothing to do; as they ran to the opposite extreme, from everything tending to ascetism and monkery. But the Pharisees inclined much towards an austere and flesh-mortifying system of doctrine and practice. Their fundamental rule of following the Tradition of the Elders, admitted of many admixtures of foreign notions and practices with the pure system of the written law.

Transmigration of souls was believed among the Jews, and especially among the Pharisees, as Brucker says. We have a sign of that belief in the Book of Wisdom before quoted.

A leading doctrine of the Pharisees was, that to attain righteousness, a man must make satisfaction for his sins by fasting, ablutions, alms and sacrifices; or by confession of his sins, prayer for pardon, and purification by suffering after death—as the Talmud teaches.

They taught works of supererogation—that is, meritorious per-

formances more than the law requires, and therefore efficacious to remove guilt.

They macerated their bodies by fasting, watching, lying on rough narrow boards, and wearing around the border of their garments a fringe of thorns, with the points projecting inwards, so as to strike upon their flesh when they moved. They made long prayers. Some walked the streets with mortar-like hoods over their heads and faces, to aid their meditations ; but as they could see only the ground at their feet, they often ran their heads against walls and posts,—which, we fear, disturbed their meditations ;—others walked without this covering, but so absorbed in contemplation, that they forgot to lift their feet as they walked, and thereby stumbled over everything in their way,—which tended, we may conceive, to break the thread of their divine contemplations. If any one would know whether the common people admired them for their sanctity, we can tell him that they did : and if he does not know that they were hypocritical, self-righteous pretenders to sanctity—let him read the Gospels and learn their true character.

The Pharisees were ascetics, but not monks. But the Jews had among them two monkish sects, who arose some four or five hundred years before monachism appeared in the Church ; but long after the Babylonish captivity and the cessation of Jewish prophecy. The one of these sects resided in Judea, the other in Egypt. Josephus gives an account of the former—Philo, of both. The Roman philosopher Pliny, also mentions the Essenes.

The Essenes, a Sect of Jewish Monks.

We have digested, under distinct heads, the materials facts given by Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, respecting this remarkable sect of Jewish monks, whose principles and practices agreed essentially with those of the Cenobite Christian monks of the fourth and fifth centuries.

1. The Essenes formed a *Separate Society*, and had little intercourse with other men. Some of them occupied houses in the

smaller towns, but the greater number lived in the wilderness of Judea in the vicinity of the Dead Sea.

They did not beg ; but, like honest men, supported themselves by regular industry. In towns or villages, they carried on innocent trades, but avoided merchandise and navigation, probably because these occupations would cause them to mix too much with other men, and might also tempt them to indulge an avaricious desire of gain. In the wilderness they were husbandmen, shepherds, and keepers of bees. They produced only necessities, being opposed to all sorts of luxury, and leading a simple and frugal manner of life.

Their number in the time of Josephus—some fifty or sixty years after Christ—was about four thousand.

2. They had a community of goods, like the Cenobite monks of later ages. What each one had when he entered the society, and what he procured afterwards by his labor, was put into the common stock from which all drew their supplies.

The general body was divided into particular associations, who labored, ate, and lodged together, like the inmates of a Christian monastery, under the government of officers.

3. They admitted no women into their society, abstained from marriage, and practiced a rigid continence. Yet (says Josephus,) they did not condemn marriage in others, considering it necessary for the propagation of mankind.

There was an order of Essenes, who differed from the more rigid sort, in permitting their members to marry ; with the austere restriction, however, that in the marriage state, they should confine sexual intercourse to the single end of procreating children, allowing the constitutional appetite no indulgence but what was necessary to this end. We shall, however, show that this austere rule was prescribed to married people by some Christian Fathers, as early as the second century, and was one of the signs of forthcoming monkery.

The stricter sort of Essenes appear to have had an ill opinion of the female sex. Josephus says that by abstaining from mar-

riage, they guarded against the lascivious behavior of women, being persuaded that none of them retain their fidelity to one man. Brucker tries in vain to make this signify only, that they could not keep a secret. For Philo goes even further, saying that the Essenes had the acuteness to perceive the incompatibility of marriage with the existence of their association. "For (says he) woman loves herself too much, is devoured by excessive jealousy, and can easily corrupt the morals of her husband by artifice and enticement. And, if she bear children to her husband, then she who before used artful blandishments, now comes out boldly and undertakes to rule her husband by main force. Wherefore, wives were considered most inimical to this society; for the man who is overcome by voluptuousness, or is ruled by his wife, can neither be pure in himself, nor honest towards mankind."

This atrocious opinion of the female sex,—which we apprehend to have been Philo's own,—is truly monkish, and outrageously unjust to the amiable sex, who are in general far more virtuous than the male,—not excepting even the monks, with all their vows upon them.

4. They supplied their society with new members by training up boys or young men;—or as Philo, quoted by Eusebius, says—men of mature age,—who are given by their parents, or who offer themselves, for that purpose. They were to pass through a noviciate of three years, before they were admitted to membership. The first year was a trial chiefly of their continence. If approved on this point, they were then purified by baptism, and subjected for two years longer to the full rigor of the society's discipline, as a final trial for membership. If they willingly submitted so long to their rules of temperance and modes of life, they were then received into full communion, on their taking a solemn vow, or as Josephus calls it, "a tremendous oath" of fidelity and obedience to the rules;—one of which was that they should never conceal anything from their fellow-members, nor reveal any of the society's secrets to others,—not even to save their lives.

5. The Essenes, while all, in theory at least, fared alike, had nevertheless a system of strict subordination among them. They had curators or directors, who governed all the movements and operations of the society. The curators belonged to the oldest class of members. Below them were three other classes divided according to age. The younger were bound to reverence and serve the elder,—a good rule, if it had not been carried too far. “The juniors are so far inferior to the elders, (says Josephus), that if an elder be touched by a junior, he must wash himself,—as if he had been defiled by the contact.” Their government was therefore a despotism, like that of the Roman Catholic monasteries.

6. If a member committed a heinous offence, they expelled him from the society. This was almost equivalent to a sentence of death:—for being bound by his “tremendous oath” not to associate with other persons, nor to partake of their food, the excommunicated member was obliged (says Josephus) to eat grass, until he was famished with hunger. They sometimes restored the offender, when they found that he was ready to perish rather than violate his oath.

7. Their *System of Morals* was pure even to austerity. Their vow bound them to be temperate in all things; to deny themselves all corporeal enjoyments beyond what life and health required; to be scrupulously faithful, just, and true; to be pious towards God, just and charitable towards men; to reverence their superiors in age and office, and to obey the rulers of their country. They also exercised themselves in fortitude to such a degree, as to despise death, and to bear any kind of privations and tortures, rather than violate their rules. They also “swore not at all,” except their solemn oath of admission at membership. Their system of morals was founded on the Pythagorean and oriental principle, that *Pleasure is morally evil*, and therefore to be avoided as incompatible with virtue. It is the principle of monachism.

8. Their *Doctrines* were in the main Jewish, but considerably adulterated with Pythagorean and oriental notions.

They had a profound reverence for their lawgiver, Moses, and for the writings of the prophets. They neglected the sacrifices and worship at the temple, just as the Christian hermits afterwards neglected all social worship; but to make up for this defect, they not only practiced a rigid ascetism, but kept the Sabbath with more than Pharisaical strictness. They would not, on that day, kindle a fire, nor move a vessel, wherein they were no better than the Pharisees; but then, neither would they *go to stool*, which was a ceremonial constipation, we think, somewhat *superpharisaical*.

They believed the *Body* to be temporary, and therefore rejected the Pharisaical doctrine of its resurrection; but the *Soul* they believed to be immortal. They held that the soul is composed of a subtle air, and that the body is its prison. They considered mortal life in the flesh, to be a state of bondage, and death a deliverance. Here we find Oriental and Pythagorean doctrines mixed in their system with Biblical Judaism, and laying a foundation for their monkish ascetism. The body, with its senses and appetites, is essentially evil, all material things, and all the pleasures of sense are evil. Therefore, the soul must be saved from their polluting influence, by mortifying the senses and subjecting the animal body and soul to a strict regimen. All the pleasant things of the world were to be shunned as evil. What do such monkish philosophers think of the Creator, who made our bodies, and our senses, and so many pleasant objects to gratify them?

The Essenes disregarded all purely speculative philosophy. With a few principles, such as we have mentioned, they regarded only what was practical, and taught them to despise all riches, elegancies, pleasures and amusements.

They were rigid predestinarians—more so than even the Pharisees. Josephus says, “The Essenes affirm that Fate (or God’s decree) governs all things; and that nothing befalls man but what is according to its determination.”*

* Josephus Antiq., B. xiii., Ch. v. Sect. 9.

Superstition is of the essence of monkery, and is therefore always found in connection with it. The following particulars show that the Essenes were a superstitious sect. They would not spit between themselves and another. This might have passed for a rule of decency, if they had not been equally scrupulous *not to spit upon the right side*. They imagined too, that by studying the Holy Books—especially by poring constantly over the discourses of the prophets, and using sundry sorts of ceremonial purification—they could acquire prophetic skill, interpret dreams and foretell future events. Their admirer, Josephus, says, that they *seldom* failed in their predictions. By the same means they also expected to acquire medical skill, and to find out what minerals and herbs would cure their diseases. These superstitions seem to have been a modification of the Chaldean magic and astrology.

10. Their daily course of life is thus described. The hour of morning twilight they consecrated to prayer, using the forms received from their ancestors. Then their curators sent them to their labors till eleven o'clock, when they assembled in one place, bathed themselves in cold water, put on their white garments, and went silently to their seats at the dinner-table. The dinner consisted only of bread and one other kind of food. The priest said grace before and after their meals. After dinner they laid aside their white garments, and went to their labors again until the evening. Then they returned to the house and took a silent supper. When they eased nature, they dug a hole in the ground, then filled it again, and afterwards washed themselves. These Jewish monks, like the Pharisees, did not conceive—as the Christian hermits afterwards did—that corporeal filthiness contributed to their spiritual sanctification. But, perhaps, it was not the love of cleanliness that made the Essenes wash themselves so, but an opinion that ceremonial ablutions purified the soul; for they wore their garment to rags before they changed them, and they would not, like other Jews, anoint themselves, but thought it a

good thing to be sweaty with labor. Oiling the body was a comfort to the Jews; therefore the Essenes would not indulge their vile bodies with an oiling. For the same reason they would not recline at table, according to the general custom of the age, but sat upright, as we do in modern times. Stolberg remarks that they adopted this position as an austerity.*

These are the chief particulars mentioned by our authorities, in their account of the Essenes. A few remarks will conclude what we have to say of them.

First, it does not appear that the Essenes practiced any fasting, except the daily abstemiousness of their diet; or that they inflicted any tortures upon their bodies, by whipping, burning, thorny garments, &c. In this respect they displayed less fanaticism than even the Pharisees. Their views of bodily mortification were therefore more sober and rational, than those of most fanatics of other times and nations. They do not appear to have held the Pharisaical and Roman Catholic dogma concerning meritorious works of supererogation.

Secondly, the quiet, temperate, and regular lives of the Essenes made them healthy and long lived. Many of them lived to be a hundred or more years old. We shall see hereafter, that in spite of their filthiness and excessive abstemiousness, many of the Christian hermits of after ages lived to be very old. From these facts, we may draw a useful lesson in favor of temperate eating as well as temperate drinking. The gluttonous voracity and luxurious viands of this sensual age and this plentiful country, fill its inhabitants with diseases, poison their enjoyments, stupify their intellects, and, we verily believe, deduct on the average some fifteen or twenty years from the duration of their lives. We would not be thought, in expressing our disapprobation of monkish austerity, to sanction the gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery, so common among all ranks of society.

* *Religionsgeschichte*, vol. iv., p. 646.

Stulti dum vitant vitia in contraria currunt.—Fools snun vices of one sort by running into the contrary.

In matters of this sort all extremes are vicious. According to the true saying just quoted from the Roman poet, monks and sensualists are at the opposite extremes of intemperance. Both are guilty of folly. The one party refuse, the other party abuse, the gifts of a wise and good Providence.

Thirdly, we shall here take from Stolberg a notice of the ancient opinion concerning the Elysian Fields. We mentioned this as an Egyptian dogma adopted by Orpheus. ~ Stolberg remarks that the Essenes held this doctrine of the Elysian Fields, as the happy abode of good souls after this life ; but he is wrong, for Josephus says that their idea of future happiness *resembled* this, not that it was identical. Our German author quotes Pindar's and Homer's descriptions of Elysium.

Pindar (Olymp. II. Antist. IV.) thus describes it.

There ocean breezes gently blow
 Around the island of the blest :
 There flame the flowers of golden hue,
 Mantling the sod, while others wreath
 The spreading boughs ; the waters bloom
 With many more : the blest encircle
 Their heads with chaplets, and their arms
 With flowery wreaths that never fade.

Homer (Od. IV. 56, &c.) had before described the Elysian Fields as the abode of heroes, after this manner :

'Tis not ordained for thee, O God-like Menelaus,
 In Argive fields where horses feed, to die.
 But thee sometime to the Elysian Fields
 At earth's remotest bound, the blest shall guide ;
 Where Rhadamanth, the swarthy hero dwells.
 There free from care shalt thou abide in peace.
 No wintry snows, no thundering rainstorms fall
 Upon that blissful shore ; but ocean sends
 Soft, cooling zephyrs to refresh the soul.

From these passages it is evident that the beautiful idea of the Elysian Fields was conveyed into Greece from Egypt, before the time of Orpheus.

Finally, respecting the time, place and circumstances of their origin, nothing is certainly known. They must have originated more than 200 years before Christ. Josephus names them with the Sadducees and Pharisees, as one of the established sects among the Jews, at a period about 160 years before Christ.* Brucker thinks that they arose in Egypt between 300 and 250 years before Christ, after Alexander the Great had planted Greeks in that country, and the Pythagorean philosophy had become known to the Jews in that country. Mosheim's hypothesis is that they originated from the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, when many fled to deserts and there learned to lead solitary lives. But after all, we do not know their origin, so that it would be of little use to discuss opinions on the subject.

The Therapeutes.

These were a sect of Egyptian Jews, resembling the Essenes, yet distinct from them. The only original account of them that has come down to modern times, is given by Philo, who considered them to be a branch of the Essenes; and perhaps they were originally; but Philo's own account shows, that they were different sects at the time when he wrote.

They were called *Therapeutes*, or *Healers* by those who wrote in Greek,—from the verb *Therapeuom* to *heal*, to *serve*. Philo doubts whether they got this name from their professing to *heal* the mind, or to *serve* God, in a superior manner.

They were, like the Essenes, a sort of Cenobite monks. They retired from the society and business of the world, gave their property to their relations and friends, and betook themselves to solitary places, where without distraction they might exercise them-

* Joseph. Antiq B. xv. ch. v.

selves in subduing the body and purifying the soul, by prayer, reading and contemplation.

The most of them lived on the border of Lake Moeris, about 120 miles south of Alexandria. Here societies of them occupied cloisters, or enclosed gardens, apart from the other inhabitants of the country. Each one had within the walls his separate cell, or little house, in which he could be solitary, yet conveniently meet his brethren in their synagogue for social exercises. The first monasteries of the Christian Cenobites, 300 years afterwards, were formed on a similar plan.

The cells of these Therapeutēs were of the simplest and plainest sort, and were furnished with nothing but what was necessary for shelter and subsistence.

They ate only at night, which they considered to be the proper time for attending to the body ; but the day was consecrated wholly to spiritual exercises. Some of them ate only once in three—or even sometimes in six,—days ;—so intensely were their souls occupied with divine contemplations. Their food consisted of bread only,—or if anything was added, it was salt and hyssop. Their only drink was water. Their clothing consisted of one plain garment of linen in the summer ;—in the winter they added a large mantle. They shunned all ornament of dress as the emblem of falsehood.

They prayed every morning and evening, and employed the interval in studying the Scriptures, in which they endeavored to discover an allegorical or spiritual sense. They considered the literal sense as the body, within which the allegorical sense lay hidden as the soul—the principle of life—which the devout student must draw forth for his spiritual nourishment. They read also the books of the Fathers of their sect, in which the Scriptures were so allegorized. They also composed psalms and hymns in praise of God, and in every variety of metre. They meditated so constantly on Divine things, that in their sleep they often dreamed of them.

They practiced celibacy and continence ; but contrary to the

custom of the Essenes, they had among them female votaries—virgins generally advanced in life, who out of religious zeal devoted themselves to the same pious exercises.

On the Sabbath day they assembled in the Synagogue ; which was divided into two parts by a wall five or six feet high. The women occupied the one side and the men the other. They seated themselves in order, according to age, with their hands concealed under their clothes, the right upon the breast, the left, below. Then one of their best instructed elders addressed them with a mild countenance and voice, aiming at instruction without the embellishments of speech. All listened in profound silence, and expressed their approbation only by looks and nods.

Their principal festival was that of Pentecost. He whose turn it was to conduct their public worship, gave them notice, and they assembled, clothed in white, to pray, eat, and sing together, with joy. When they were ranged in order, they lifted up their hands in prayer for a blessing on their feast. After prayer they reclined on rush mats, leaning on their elbows ; and kept the profoundest silence, not daring even to breathe audibly. Then one proposed a question out of the Scriptures, and resolved it himself, slowly and distinctly, that he might be well understood. The others listened attentively, and signified by mute signs, whether they understood, or had some doubt. The interpretations of Scripture, as before mentioned, were allegorical.

After the discourse was finished, they applauded it ; and then the speaker rose and began to sing a hymn, either one of their ancient ones, or a new one composed by himself. All the others listened silently to the main part, but joined, both men and women, in repeating the chorus.

When the hymn was finished, young men chosen for the purpose, brought in the tables, and furnished them with leavened bread, salt, hyssop, and water. Only the more delicate among the old men, had warm bread.

When they had partaken of this repast, they cleared a space in the middle of the hall, and formed two choirs, the one of men,

other of women, each conducted by the one who was considered as the most honorable and the best singer. They sang several hymns in honor of God, sometimes in concert, sometimes by responses. Meanwhile they gesticulated with their hands, danced, and expressed the transport of their souls conformably to the tenor and spirit of their song.

Then they all united in a general dance, intended to represent the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. This was intended to represent Miriam's choral dance upon that occasion (Exodus xv.) The grave voices of the men (says Philo) and the shrill voices of the women, formed an agreeable concert.

Thus they passed the night, and found themselves more lively at the end of it than they were when they first assembled. At sunrise they lifted their hands and prayed to God for a happy day, and for a mind capable of understanding the truth. Then they retired, each one to his cell, and resumed their ordinary course of life.*

Such were the Therapeutes, according to Philo. Whilst they agreed with the Essenes of Judea in being Jews, monks, ascetics, allegorists, enthusiasts, and so forth, the two sects differed in their manner of life, so much as to make it evident, that they composed independent associations, and had lived for ages apart from one another. They differed in their government and discipline—the Therapeutes allowing much more individual liberty than the Essenes. They fasted more: they sang and danced, and had women amongst them to animate their devotions, so that their manner of life was much more spirited and impulsive, than that of the grave, silent, mechanical Essenes, who moved day by day like clock-work, under the regulating power of a mainspring.

About two hundred and fifty years after Philo, Eusebius the

* See Philo's Tracts *On the Contemplative Life*, *On the Practical Life of the Essenes*, and *Every Virtuous Man is Free*.

Church historian copied the foregoing account of the Therapeutes,* and had the absurd presumption to say, that these Therapeutes were Christian converts of St. Mark, the Evangelist, who, according to an oral tradition, was founder of the Church in Alexandria. Mark, the Evangelist, may have founded the Alexandrian Church ; but to suppose that he founded the monastic association described by Philo, or that they were Christian converts of St Mark, or any other saint, is exceedingly ridiculous. Philo was an aged man, when the Alexandrian Church was founded. How then could the monastic establishments, which he describes as existing about the shores of Lake Moeris, far up the country, have been founded by the Evangelist ? Or how could those Jewish monks have been converted so soon to Christianity ? Philo describes them as a sect of long standing, without one particle of Christianity in their doctrines or practices—mere Jews, who had imbibed some ascetical notions from the Oriental philosophy, and had long pursued, as Philo did after them, an allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures. In fact, Philo never once alludes to Christ or Christians in all his works.

But no sooner had Eusebius, who wrote after monkery arose in the Church, started the idea that they were Christian converts of St. Mark, than Sozomen the Church historian, and other monkery-loving Fathers of the Church, seized upon the idea, in order to give this new institution of Christian monachism the appearance of an apostolical origin. This shows what the professed opinions of these Fathers were worth, when they had an end to serve by propagating an error. So manifestly absurd is Eusebius' opinion of the Therapeutes, that the less credulous writers among the modern Roman Catholics have given it up. Valesius, in his notes on Eusebius, refutes it. Even Fleury, a strong believer in the miraculous stories of the Fathers, hints his dissent : but Tillemont, whose capacious faith could swallow the Fathers whole,

† Eccles. Hist. B., II., ch. 17. See also Sozomen's Eccl. History, B. I, ch. 12.

endeavors to sustain Eusebius by a feeble argument.* Father Helyot, the monk, in his great History of the Religious Orders, makes an elaborate attempt, on the authority of this passage of Eusebius, to trace Christian monachism back to the apostolical age. His argument is too feeble to require a particular refutation.

* Tillemont. Ecclesiastical Memoirs, (English folio edition.) Vol. I. Fol. 74 and 399.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LATER JEWISH AND GENTILE PHILOSOPHY.

CHRISTIAN ascetism began in the second, Christian monachism, in the third century after the birth of Christ. The earlier philosophy of the Jews and Gentiles prepared the way; their later philosophy hastened the progress of monastic principles and practices in the Church. We have before remarked, that the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophies did, after the Christian era, imbibe more and more of the Orientalism with which they had been strongly dosed from the beginning. The same is true of the Jewish philosophy. Both contributed—but the Grecian more than the Jewish—to fill the Christian mind with ascetic notions, and to lead the enthusiasts of the Church into all the extravagancies of monachism.

We shall now give a concise account of the later systems of philosophy prevalent among Jews and Gentiles in the eastern parts of the Roman empire, where monachism arose.

1. *The Jewish Cabbalistic Philosophy.*

A short notice of this will suffice to show how deeply the principles of the oriental philosophy had worked themselves into the minds of the Jewish doctors in the early ages of Christianity.

But before we touch the Cabbala, we must give the learned among our readers a taste of Jewish Rabbinism in the first century of our era. We copy from Brucker, who took it from the Talmud, that huge collection of the wise, and the foolish, sayings

of the Rabbis. We regret that decency forbids us to expose it to common readers in our vernacular English,—it is so exquisitely philosophical in its way.

“ Rabbi Akibha dixit :—Ingressus sum aliquando post Rabbi Josuam in *sedis secretae locum* ; et tunc ab eo didici, Prime, quod non versus orientem et occidentem, sed versus septentrionem nos debemus convertere [quando alveum deoneremus] :—Secundo, quod non in pedes erectum, sed jam considentem, se retegere liceat :—Tertio, didici, quod *podex* non dextro sed sinistra manu, abstergendus est :—Ad haec objecit ibi Ben Hazar,—Usque adeo vero perfricuisti frontem erga magistrum tuum, ut *cacantem observares* ? Respondit, *Legi haec arcana sunt*, ad quae discenda id necessario mihi agendum fuit.”

What refinement of moral teaching was this, when the most unsavory of human actions was to be so regulated as to give a mystical signification to the whole process ! We did not know, until we met with this passage, that there could be so much philosophical wisdom in *cacando*, when it was done by rule.

The Hebrew word *Cabbala* signifies *Traditions*. In a general sense, it means that system of oral Law, which the Pharisees pretended to have come down from Moses, and to be of equal authority with the written Law. The Cabbala comprehended at first only a system of traditional doctrines and mystical interpretations of the written Law, founded on the number, forms &c., of the letters, and on other equally insignificant circumstances. With this early part of the Cabbala our subject has nothing to do. But after the time of our Saviour, the Cabbalistic doctrine was greatly enlarged. It then embraced a system of philosophical speculations and magical superstitions, some of which were of an ascetic tendency. We shall give an outline of this part of the Cabbala.

The Cabbalistic Philosophy contained the following principles :

1. Of nothing, nothing can proceed or be made.
2. God is the primary source of all beings.
3. All things proceed from God by emanation or outflowing,

as light proceeds from the sun. But one being only emanated immediately from God. This primary emanation is called Adam Kadmon. He is the image of God, the First-Born ; from whom all other beings derived their existence. Like the Demiurge of Plato and the Logos of Philo, he is the Divine Agent by whom creation was made. He is the Divine *Man* after whose image our first parents were made.

4. From Adam Kadmon emanated ten luminous fountains or spirits of purest light, called Sephiroth ; from whom, as their immediate source, all celestial beings emanated, and in whom they yet dwell in their state of emanation, that is, they are not separated from their source, though existing as distinct personal agents.

5. These heavenly beings are of two ranks ; the higher being pure spirits, not formed of any pre-existent material ; the second are angelic, composed of a fine substance or material previously existing.

6. Four worlds proceeded from these celestial sources.

7. The matter of this world is the last of a series of ten emanations ; one thing proceeding from another, and each successive emanation being inferior to the preceding. The tenth and lowest is matter. It is therefore the most imperfect of all substances, containing the last dregs of existence, and so near to nonentity, that nothing can emanate from it. The possible degrees and extent of being are therefore complete, beginning with the absolutely perfect God, and ending with the almost non-existing matter of the earth.

8. The universe is composed of ten concentric spheres, corresponding with the ten Sephiroth and the ten degrees of existence. This earth is the central and lowest sphere ; the outermost and uppermost is the highest heaven, around which infinite space is filled with Divine light, called in the Greek language, the *Pleroma* or fullness. In this the highest order of celestial beings have their habitation. The term *Pleroma* is several times used by St. Paul, but never in this peculiar sense. But the Gnostics

of the second century made great use of the notion of a super-celestial Pleroma, which they, as well as the Jews, borrowed of the Persian philosophy.

9. As the spheres are all composed of solid substance with large spaces between them, there was need of some channel by which beings could pass through from one sphere to another. Such a channel of communication was therefore cut through all the upper spheres, a sort of hatchways one perpendicularly above another, like those made in the floors of five story warehouses, for hoisting up and letting down goods.

10. The Cabbalistic doctrine concerning demons, good and evil,—that is, the different orders of spiritual beings between God and man,—is similar to that of all the orientals.

11. The human soul is not a demon incarnate. All souls pre-existed in Adam, and not as demons of the upper regions. The Cabbalists here varied from the heathen philosophy, as they were constrained to do by the Mosaic account of the creation of man.

12. They, however, adopted the Platonic notion of the compound nature of the human soul, but with some modifications, partly conformable to the doctrine of the New Platonic school of Alexandria.

First, there is a sensitive soul, called *Nephesch* in Hebrew, and corresponding to the animal soul of Plato's philosophy. It gives the body its vitality, action, and sensibility. This soul is common to animals, and perishes with the body.

Secondly, there is a self-subsisting mind or spirit, called *Ruach*, endowed with reason and diffused through the body. It is proper to the body, being necessary to complete the constitution of man, if not of all animals who possess any degree of intelligence. It seems to have been considered as the animal intellect.

Thirdly, there is a superior intellectual soul called the *Neschamah*, corresponding to the rational soul of Plato's philosophy: but instead of being, as Plato taught, a pre-existing demon, it is derived by special communication from the Divine Intellect, and as an

emanation continues in union with its Divine source. By virtue of this union it has an intuitive perception of intelligible things. The notion seems to have been, that it is the high intellect or reason of man by which he is distinguished from all other animals. It might be called the scientific soul, possessing the faculty of discerning abstract ideas, and of discovering the laws of nature and the existence of invisible beings.

One soul invests another as its vehicle. *Nephesch* is the vehicle or coat of *Ruach*, and this of *Neschamah*; so that one soul envelopes another, like the coats of an onion, or like the above-described spheres of the universe, only, we suppose, the successive souls are more closely wrapped about one another than the spheres. This notion of spiritual envelopes was borrowed of the New Platonists.

Such is, in sum and substance, the Cabbalistic system of philosophy. Mixed with it was a belief in the Chaldean magic. The reader will discern in the system a compound of Pythagorean, Persian, Chaldean and Egyptian doctrines, modified by a few ingredients from Moses.* Tenneman remarks that many of the Jews embraced also the Persian and Gnostic doctrine of two eternal principles, contending for the mastery of the world, as well as the doctrines of a primitive uncreated light, and of demons inhabiting the upper regions.†

At what time this philosophical Cabbalism was matured, is uncertain. The earlier books on the subject are very obscure, and the later ones, which develope it more clearly, were written after the rise of monachism in the Church. We can hardly doubt, however, that as early as the first half of the third century, when Christian monachism was as yet unhatched in the shell, many of the oriental notions embraced in the Cabbala, had already gotten possession of the Jewish mind, and some of them a century or two earlier.

* See Brucker, Hist. Crit. Phil., vol. ii. Jewish Phil. y.

† Tenneman's Hist. of Phil. (Compend.) § 209.

There is considerable affinity between this Jewish philosophy and that of the Gnostics, who so troubled the churches in the second and third centuries. The Jewish Cabbalists did not all adopt the Persian doctrine of two eternal principles, as the Gnostics did. But the doctrines about concentric spheres and a *Pleroma* of Divine light above the heavens, of the descent of supernal beings from the *pleroma* to the earth, the base nature of matter, and its evil influence upon the soul, were common to both systems.

2. *The later Pythagoreans.*

A few words must suffice for these ; just enough to show that Pythagoreanism lost nothing of its oriental and ascetic character in the hands of its later professors.

Ocellus, one of these, taught that every part of the universe has its distinct sort of beings ; the heavens have the Gods, the air has the demons, and the earth has the human race. This characterizes his theory of nature. His austere system of morality is marked by the following principle : “ The act of generation is for children only, not at all for pleasure.”

Archytas, another Pythagorean, has left us a maxim, which indicates the spirit of his moral philosophy. “ There is no greater pest of mankind than pleasure.”

Between these and the latest Pythagoreans appeared *Heraclitus*, a distinguished philosopher, but not of the same school. He taught a system, which, in some points, was strongly oriental. We therefore insert here a brief notice of some of his doctrines.

The *soul of the world* is from humid evaporation. This mundane soul surrounding a man, passes into him through the channel of the senses ; that is, if we understand him aright, the soul of the world animates the human body at the time of its conception.

All things are full of souls and demons. Souls after death return to the soul of the world, which is of a kindred nature.

The body is to be despised as viler than dung. The soul loses much of its fiery nature, while it is compressed in the body, but regains it when it is released by death and joins the soul of the world.

Those who were more particularly distinguished as New Pythagoreans, flourished in the Eastern provinces of the Roman empire after the Christian era. The most famous of these was Appollonius of Tyana, a man of austere life, and a reputed miracle-worker. He lived in the second century. Among his doctrines we select the following as characteristic of his moral system :

“The body is a prison of the soul, and this life is a state of punishment.”

“No bloody sacrifice should be offered, because of the relationship between the souls of men and of brutes.”

“Riches bring trouble and anxiety. Why then should a man desire to be rich ?”

“Loquacity is dangerous ; but silence is safe.”

The two last maxims have nothing in them decidedly ascetic, unless they be taken in a Pythagorean sense, as they should be. Suffice it to say in general, that the later Pythagoreans, instead of relaxing the ascetic austerity of the original system of their great master, rather increased its severity, and showed a constant tendency, like the new Platonists, towards a monkish hatred of the body, and an ill usage of it, for the purification of the soul.

3. *The Eclectics and New Platonists.*

The city of Alexandria, as we have mentioned before, was no less famous for its schools of learning, than it was for its wealth and commerce. The Grecian philosophy coming here into contact with the Oriental systems, could hardly fail to receive some mixture and modification from the constant collision and agitation of opinions. This might be expected to take place especially in the Pythagorean and Platonic systems, which were originally derived in part from the philosophies of the East.

Besides the circumstances just mentioned, another tended greatly, in the second century, and afterwards, to give a gloomy and ascetic cast to the opinions of mankind in the Roman empire. The empire was then in its decline ; bloody civil war often raged ; fierce barbarians often ravaged the frontiers ; taxation to the utmost consumed much of the fruits of industry ; and slavery, while it increased the vicious luxury of the rich, diminished the population, and almost ruined the agriculture of many provinces, but mostly of Italy, the heart of the empire.* The distresses of the times and discouraging views of the future, gave a souring tendency to men's feelings, and disposed them to gloomy views of mortal life, and to dissatisfaction with the constitution of nature in this world. Hence the prevailing system of philosophy would bend towards a conformity with the general tendency to melancholy in the minds of the age. The Oriental philosophies presented those gloomy views of life in the body which suited this state of mind, and therefore influenced the views of those who studied and taught the Greek philosophy.

About the year 200, arose at Alexandria a new sect of philosophers called Eclectics, because they selected principles from different systems and endeavored to combine them together into a new system. They were also called New Platonists, because they took the old philosophy of Plato as the basis of their new system, and modified it by incorporating with some of his leading doctrines those which they selected from other systems. Modern writers sometimes speak of the Eclectics as distinct from the New Platonists. As different professors made different combinations in selecting, or eclecticising, from different sources, so there was a distinction among the new schools ; but that which prevailed and had most influence was properly New Platonism. We shall therefore confine our attention to that. The reader will see how directly this system tended to all the enthusiasm and extravagance of monkery.

The first distinguished teacher of New Platonism was Am-

* Pliny Hist. Nat. l. xviii, c. 1—7. Livy, l. vi, c. 12.

monius Saccas of Alexandria, who had been educated as a Christian, but became merely a philosopher with little or no Christianity in him. He was followed by Platinus and Porphyry of the third century, and Jamblichus of the fourth. These were the most distinguished teachers of the sect. Writings remain of the three latter, but none of Ammonius.

Their doctrines, so far as they concern our subject, are summarily comprehended under the following heads :

1. *Of God.*

There is one infinite Supreme God, from whom three chief Gods emanated, who created and rule the world with supreme power.

Theodoret, a Christian Father, thought, that the trinity of the New Platonists resembled the Christian trinity ; but as Brucker well remarks, it was more like the Hindoo Trimunti, three sovereign Gods, sprung from an original infinite quiescent Brahm. The later Egyptian theology contained a similar doctrine, as we have stated in our account of the Egyptian philosophy in Chapter V. Some of the Eclectics, however, taught the doctrine of three eternal principles, which brought their trinity nigher to that of the Christians, as defined by the council of Nice. That above-mentioned was the doctrine of the Alexandrian Eclectics, who mixed the old Egyptian theology with the Platonic.

The reader perceives in this new Platonic theology the oriental doctrine of emanation, more distinctly developed than it was in original Platonism.

2. *Celestial Beings.*

There are various orders of beings between the highest Gods and men ;—subordinate Gods, angels, demons and heroes. The notion of Angels was borrowed from the Jews, Christians or Chaldeans.

The Gods exercise the government of the several departments of nature. Angels and demons have charge over subordinate

affairs. All the celestial beings act as mediators between the supreme Gods and men. This notion of the mediatorial agency of inferior Gods and demons, is of oriental origin, and was adopted by Plato.

The Gods are void of passions ; but the demons, of a nature inferior to them, have passions, and thus partake of both the divine and the human natures, being eternal like the Gods, but subject to passions like men. The heroes are the lowest order of celestial beings, and are but one degree above men.

Demons are invested with a body or vehicle—as all created spirits are,—but this body is not material and corruptible, like the human body. It is composed of a refined substance, different from the substances with which we are acquainted. These celestial bodies are incapable of suffering and of change ; but they derive nourishment or refreshment from the sacrifices that men offer to them ; hence these demons—who were the Gods of the heathen world—are pleased with sacrifices. They do not, however, derive nourishment from those material parts of the sacrifice, which are suitable to the human body, but from the immaterial part, or refined essence, purged of everything gross enough to be apprehended by the senses. This notion of spiritual beings feeding on immaterial substance existed also among the Boodhists of Eastern Asia, as we have shown in our extracts from Borri, in Chapter III. of this work.

Jamblichus following the old Egyptian Theology, taught the doctrine of guardian angels, or demons. The office of the guardian angel of every man was to unite the soul to the body, and to attend upon it, until it was restored to its original blissful abode in the heavens. The monks adopted the same notion, that every man had a guardian angel who attended him through life.

3. *Apparitions.*

We come now to those doctrines, in which the new Platonists departed most widely from Plato himself, and which gave a par-

ticularly enthusiastic and ascetic character to their religious philosophy.

Whilst they taught that the Gods and demons—indeed all spiritual beings—could not be perceived by our senses; they nevertheless believed in spectres and apparitions of Gods, of demons both good and evil, and of the departed souls of men. They held, therefore, that these spiritual beings were able to invest themselves with visible forms, and thus to become objects of sense.

Visions of the Gods (says Jamblichus) are salutary, they bring health, virtue and intellectual elevation, restoring the faculties and cheering the heart. These salutary visions are also uniform and immutable.

Apparitions of good demons, called archangels and angels, are of the same character, but in a less degree. As angels are charged with attendance on individuals, or with special services and messages, so, when they appear, it is to bring some special benefit.

Apparitions of evil demons are variable; but always frightful in appearance, as well as hurtful in their effects. They oppress the body, inflict diseases, hurry the soul into some passionate excitement, and prevent its aspirings after heavenly things by chaining it to earthly and sensual things.

Spectres of departed souls, if pure and enrolled among the angels, call us upwards and fill us with good hopes. But impure souls, on the contrary, turn our desires and hopes to sensual pleasures, excite evil passions and corrupt the mind.

As apparitions differ in their effects, so they do in their attendants and phenomena. Gods are attended by angels surrounding them. Archangels—that is, the highest order of good demons,—have a train of angels after them. All good demons appear with tokens of their good works. Avenging demons exhibit the various sorts of punishment which they inflict. Evil demons bring with them noxious beasts with bloody mouths. Departed souls exhibit a fire of no certain character, representing the soul of the world. A purified soul shines with a pure fire, but a sinking soul

is accompanied by the appearance of chains and tortures. In short, all exhibit the sort of appearance which is congenial to their nature and condition. Aerial spirits exhibit a bright aerial fire; those of earth, one that is gross and dusky; but the heavenly Gods shine with a pure and brilliant light.

Such was the demonology of the New Platonists. Psellus truly remarked, that the same fancies were adopted by the Christians, who related numberless fables of apparitions. The reader will see in the following life of St. Antony, by St. Athanasius, a demonology so much resembling this, as to show that they were both derived from the same source.

4. *Theurgy.*

The New Platonists believed that apparitions of superior beings could be produced by human agency, according to the rules of magic or Theurgy. They derived this as well as some of their other notions from the Chaldeans.

The theurgist must, in the first place, purify himself by fasting and other bodily mortifications, and by devotional exercises, so as to release the soul from its fleshly incumbrances and qualify it for communion, with the Gods.

He was then, by intense meditation, accompanied by certain ceremonies to work himself into a state of Divine Enthusiasm, the signs of which are thus described by Porphyry and Jamblichus, especially the latter.

The subject of this Divine Enthusiasm was not in his proper senses, which were in a sleeping state. He had no command of his mental faculties, nor consciousness of what he said or did. He was insensible to fire or to any bodily injury. Carried off by a Divine impulse, he passed through impassable places, through fire and water, without knowing where he was. He lived not an animal life, nor that of a human being—but a life more divine.

The cause of this peculiar condition was the divine illumination, which took full possession of the man, absorbed all his faculties, motions, and senses, making him speak what he did not

understand—or rather seem to speak it ; for he was, in fact, merely the minister or instrument of the God who possessed him.

We need scarcely remind the reader of the striking resemblance between the state here described, and that of mesmeric somnambulism, which has caused so much wonder during some years past ; and we cannot help believing that this Divine Enthusiasm of the ancients, as here described, was the same thing.

By such means, the theurgist could produce visions and apparitions of both good and evil spirits. He performed certain rites and sacrifices, and thus brought upon himself the enthusiastic state, and produced apparitions. If all was purely and rightly done, the good Gods or angels appeared. Then evil demons fled, and nothing could disturb the pious theurgist. But if he was not duly purified, or if he impiously invaded the sacred rites ; he failed to reach the Gods, but was filled with evil and impious spirits, and became wicked and lascivious like the spirits who possessed him.

5. *Of the Human Soul and Body.*

The New Platonists retained the oriental and Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul as a demon in the upper regions. Porphyry endeavored to explain how these spiritual beings came to descend into gross matter, and assume terrestrial bodies : but his theory is not worth repeating.

They also held the doctrine of transmigration of souls.

They not only considered matter as the source of evil, and the body as a prison of the soul ; but they went so far as *to hate the body, and to feel ashamed of it*. So long as the soul is enveloped in matter, they believed that it could never enjoy true happiness, unless it delivered itself from the malign influence of the body by a severe course of ascetic purification.

6. *Ascetical Purification of the Soul.*

The New Platonists carried out their principles by observing *the severest rules of bodily mortification*. They acknowledged and

lamented *the depravity of human nature, resulting from the influence of material things upon the soul*, through the appetites and passions. They laid the blame upon the body in which the soul is confined, and therefore declared war against the body and all the pleasures of sense. Porphyry wrote a special treatise in commendation of fasting, and especially of abstinence from animal food. This sect also *considered marriage as a less holy state than philosophical chastity*. Some of them, like the Christian Father Origen, went so far as to cut off their genitals, that they might never again defile the soul by venereal gratifications.

Ammonius, the founder of the school, taught, about the year 200, that *the soul should cast off the shackles of the body, by resisting its motions and desires, and breaking off all commerce with it, and reducing its strength by severe fasting*;—that the mind should ascend to its source by prayer and divine contemplations, night and day, mixing hymns of praise to the Gods, with other pious exercises; that it should by all means cultivate pure affections, and devote itself to spiritual exercises, taking care *not to indulge in any pleasure of sense*.

In short, the New Platonists, while they differed from the Christians in their theology, agreed with the Christian ascetics in warring against the body and all the pleasures connected with it. Thus it appears that the oriental doctrines that led to monachism had thoroughly penetrated the mind of society in the countries where Christian monachism arose.

The chief end of this New Platonic philosophy—as Brucker observes—was enthusiasm. Considering the mind as debased by the body, it aimed to purify and to elevate it by bodily mortifications and divine exercises, by which they hoped to attain to an intuitive perception of God and a spiritual communion and intercourse with celestial beings. By a course of purifying exercises, and by prayer and sacrifice according to the rules of theurgy, they expected to be so filled with divine illumination, as to have visions of God and holy beings, thus to prepare themselves for ascending

at death to the celestial abodes, where they would enjoy eternal felicity with God and the angels of light.

The same enthusiasm characterized the Christian ascetics, and especially the primitive monks. Essentially the same notions of the body, and of the means by which the soul was to be purified and delivered from its evil influences, actuated their conduct. They had essentially the same system of demonology, the same visions of good and of evil spirits.

So close an affinity between the two systems, shows that they had the same origin. Brucker supposed that the New Platonists borrowed of the Christians of their time, and, to some small extent this may be true. But on the other hand, we cannot doubt, that the Oriental philosophy was the primary source of all those notions and practices, in which this system differed from the teachings of the Gospel. We have now concluded our investigation of this subject. We have fully shown the influence of the Oriental philosophy upon the religious opinions of mankind, in the countries where Christianity was infected with ascetism and monkery; and thus we have traced Christian monachism to the common source of all monachism—the religious philosophy of the Hindoos and Boodhists of Eastern Asia.

CHAPTER X.

IS MONACHISM A SCRIPTURAL INSTITUTION ?

IN the year 1626, the Capuchin Friar, Jacob Boulduc, published at Paris a book on the state of the Church in all ages. In this work he gave a history of monachism among the patriarchs before the flood. It began—that is, monachism began—he said, with Enos the son of Seth. When Enos heard his grandfather Adam describe the lost felicity of Paradise, he determined to renew this happy life by turning monk. He and his brothers and sisters, therefore, betook themselves to a solitary life in the desert, where they lived like angels, praying, singing psalms and working.*

And whence did Boulduc learn all this? Why, from Genesis, chapter iv. ver. 26, where it is said, that when Enos was born, “men began to call upon the Lord.” That is all. Now, when a monk can find monkery in a text like that, he can be at no loss to find it anywhere in the Bible.

But this poor Capuchin Boulduc, was not the first, nor by a long way the greatest advocate of monkery, who imagined that there was some authority for it in that text. Cardinal Bellarmine, the ablest defender of popery before Bossuet, had previously cited the same text, though rather timidly, as evidence that monachism existed before the flood.

Now every man who reads the Bible without having his head previously stuffed with monkish prejudices, must perceive that no such institution as the monachism existing in the Roman Catholic

* See Weber's “*Moncherei, oder Geschichtliche Darstellung der Klasterwelt,*” at the beginning.

Church, is in any way recognized, taught or suggested, either in the Old Testament or in the New. The advocates of monachism, rely mainly on the Old Testament, as affording examples, which justify the institution.

Now, we might, properly, in this case, foreclose all argument from the Old Testament, by alleging these three unquestionable facts :

1st. That no monastic institution is recognized by Christ or his Apostles as existing, or as authorized to exist, among the Jews, in their time. The Essenes did exist, we know ; but they are never once alluded to in the New Testament.

2d. That neither Christ nor his Apostles established, authorized or suggested anything like monachism, solitary or Cenobite : and

3d. That the Christians of the two first centuries never understood, either from Scripture or from oral tradition, that such an institution or manner of life was either necessary or proper for a Christian man.

Of what avail would it be then, if examples of monachism could be found in the Old Testament ? They could never reach us through such a triple wall of separation. We are Christians, not Jews ; we are under the Gospel, not under the law ; we are not bound, nor even authorized, to do everything or anything that may have been done under the old dispensation, even by inspired men and holy patriarchs. Jacob had four wives. May we have four ? Samuel hewed Agag in pieces. May we do such a thing ? David, as an inspired poet, cursed his enemies. May we curse, therefore ? The prophet Elisha by his solemn curse brought two she-bears out of a wood to destroy the children who mocked him. May we therefore have wicked children torn in pieces by bulldogs ? Yet Elisha is the main example of Old Testament monachism. Why take one act of his as an example for our imitation, and reject another which was sanctioned by a divine miracle ? Elijah, the prophet, and King Jehu slew the prophets of Baal. This was an example of religious persecution ; and

well has the Church of Rome followed it, to the utmost of her power. But does this example, though divinely approved, authorize Christian persecutions? We say that it does not; because the Gospel authorizes no such thing. Neither could Old Testament examples of monachism, if such existed, authorize Christian monachism, without the sanction of Christ and his Apostles.

But let us see what the mighty Bellarmine alleges from the Bible in favor of monachism.

1. He cites the text before mentioned in the fourth chapter of Genesis, as evidence of antediluvian monachism. We have not another word to say on that text.

2. He alleges the vow of the Nazarite, in Numbers, chapter vi. as an example of legal monachism.

The material part of this provision of the Mosaic Law is contained in the following verses:

V. 2. When either a man or a woman shall separate themselves to vow the vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord;—v. 3, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink,—neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes nor dried;—v. 5. All the days of the vow of his separation, there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled in which he separateth himself, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.—v. 6. All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall come at no dead body.—v. 8. All the days of his separation he shall be holy unto the Lord.

The rest of the law of the Nazarite only prescribed the sacrifices that he was to offer, when he happened to touch a dead body, and when the days of his separation were fulfilled, and he might cut his hair.

This law neither enjoins nor recommends the making of a vow of separation; it merely regulates a custom which some Israelites had followed, in imitation probably of the Egyptians, who like the Hindoos were much given to ascetic superstitions. Indeed we

may safely infer from the form and provisions of the law, that it was intended not to encourage but to restrain excesses of this sort. The customary vow of Nazar or separation was so regulated, that it came essentially short of monachism. The vow of the Nazarite did not separate him from his usual business, nor from the society of his family or of mankind in general. When Saint Paul, on one of his missionary tours, took such a vow in his character of Jew, he still pursued his ordinary course of action. (See Acts xviii. 18). The Nazarite limited his vow to such time as he chose. Two extraordinary cases are mentioned—those of Sampson and of John the Baptist, in which the parents by divine admonition made their unborn sons Nazarites for life. In such cases only was the obligation perpetual. The Nazarite was bound to three observations only. 1st. abstinence from wine and grapes: 2d. avoidance of ceremonial defilement by touching a dead body: and 3d. to let the hair grow uncut. The vow embraced not a single particular comprehended in the vows and practices of monkery;—neither poverty, nor obedience to a superior, nor chastity;—neither prayer, nor fasting, nor watching, nor solitude, nor anything else that characterizes the monastic life.

3. We next take up his argument from the Rechabites. He cites their customs as an approved example of monachism. (Jerem. xxxv.)

These people were not Israelites, though they lived among them and professed their religion. They were of the Kenites, who descended from Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. Jonadab, ancestor of these Rechabites, enjoined it upon his family, not to drink wine, nor live in houses, nor till the ground; but to live in tents as shepherds and herdsmen, like their fore-fathers in the desert. And so they lived with their families from age to age, as the pastoral tribes of Asia have continued to live until this day. And their mode of life is solemnly quoted by a learned divine of the church of Rome, as an example of monkery!—A tribe of monks keeping cattle *with their wives and children*. Oh! but the Rechabites drank no wine!—No; nor do the tribes of the Mahometan

Arabs, who now pasture their flocks upon the same ground. Are they monks, therefore ?

4. "We have (says Bellarmine) in the same Old Testament Elijah and Elisha, and the sons of the prophets, living without wives and worldly riches : of whom St. Jerome says in an epistle to Rusticus ;—"The sons of the prophets whom we read of as monks in the Old Testament, built themselves cells by the Jordan, away from the crowds of cities, and lived upon barley bread and herbs." And in another epistle to Paulinus, speaking of monks, he says,—“Our founder Elijah, our Elisha, and our leaders, the sons of the prophets, lived in the fields and deserts, and made themselves tabernacles by the flowings of the Jordan.” Such is Bellarmine’s, or rather St. Jerome’s, argument from the case of these prophets.

Now supposing that Elijah, Elisha, and their disciples had been monks, and that their example could break through the triple wall which separates Old Testament facts from Christian obligation,—still this example would fail to sustain the Roman Catholic system of monachism ; because it is example, not of an established or permanent institution, but of a temporary expedient adopted by a few individuals under pressing and peculiar circumstances, and which was laid aside and never resumed, after those individuals and those circumstances had passed away.

But what are the facts of the case ? Jerome with his head and heart full of monkish prejudices, did not state the facts either fully or fairly.

In a time of general apostacy in Israel, when both king and people had forsaken the law and worshipped Baal ; God raised up Elijah and Elisha, who at the continual hazard of their lives should testify against the prevailing idolatry, and preserve the knowledge of the law among such disciples as they could gather around them. These prophets, like some of the apostles and primitive Christians, were obliged for their own safety, to live without wives, and without the care of worldly goods, and to keep themselves much of the time in solitary places, and often to flee

from place to place, that they might avoid the persecuting rage of their enemies. "Lord, (said Elijah once, when he took refuge in the desert,) the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars and slain thy prophets; and I only am left, and they seek to take away my life."

These two prophets gathered their sons,—that is, their disciples,—into schools at several places, after the example of former schools of the prophets. Bethel and Jericho were the chief seats of these schools, (2 Kings, ch. ii.) These cities were within the kingdom of Judah, and less exposed to persecution, than the more idolatrous country of the ten tribes of Israel.

The school at Jerico, a few miles from the Jordan, had increased so much in number during Elisha's time, that they needed more house-room, and as no timber grew about Jericho, they proposed to their master Elisha, that they should go to the river where trees grew, and cut beams suitable for the enlargement of their accommodations. (2 Kings, ch. vi.)

As the circumstances of their living on barley bread and herbs, and their building themselves cells by the flowings of the Jordan—that is, in an uninhabited place—these existed nowhere, that we have seen, but in the monkish imaginations of Jerome and Bellarmine. As the circumstances on which the argument is founded, vanish upon inspection, so does the monkery of Elijah, Elisha, and the sons of the prophets, who could never have been dreamed of as founders of monachism, had not the want of Scriptural authority driven the advocates of the system to build upon such a slight and unstable foundation.

5. Finally, Bellarmine says, that nearly all the Fathers consider John the Baptist as the first hermit.

It is true that John lived in the wilderness, ate locusts and wild honey, and wore a coarse garment of camel's hair, girded about him with a leathern girdle. We may certainly infer that he was also unmarried, and that having been a Nazarite from his birth, he had never been either shaven or shorn, and probably not often either combed or washed; and that he looked exceedingly shaggy and wild. He was therefore very like a hermit.

But it is a very questionable point whether he did not after all lack one essential quality of a hermit—that of being a recluse, or solitary devotee. In Luke, (ch. i., 80,) we are told that John “was in the deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel.” The country in which he and his parents lived, is elsewhere (in verse 39) called the Hill Country. Though comparatively wild and mountainous, it was not uninhabited. It is the region that extends from Jericho southwards along the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Being generally too rocky for cultivation, the inhabitants depended for subsistence mainly on pasturage and fruit-trees. Here the Essenes led their austere monastic life. Here was the city—doubtless a small one—in which the Baptizer was born. (Luke, i. 39, 40.) Here he led his private austere life, until he came forth as a prophet and preacher of repentance. Whether he lived as an anchorite in some mountain cave, or like an ascetic of the second century, with his relations in the city, neither Bellarmine, nor any other man of later ages, could determine. His food and dress, as described by the Evangelists, would not appear so strange to the rude shepherds of his native wilderness, as they did to the more polished citizens of Jerusalem. No man, therefore, not even a monkish Father of the fourth century, had authority to affirm that John Baptist was the first hermit—or a hermit at all in the sense meant by Bellarmine and the Fathers. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and like his prototype, he was an extraordinary man, raised up for an extraordinary occasion. His austere manners became him as the preacher of repentance to an evil and adulterous generation.

But his manner of life is not exhibited as a model for our imitation. Jesus is our pattern, and he was no monk. He came eating and drinking like other men, and associated freely with all classes of society. Had Elijah and John been monks to all intents and purposes, what would Christ’s disciples have to do with their example, unless Christ had instructed his disciples to imitate their peculiar mode of life? The only case in which a Christian could imitate their uncouth austerity, with any appearance of

reason, would be when like them he was divinely commissioned to rebuke the sins of a generation of vipers. Then a wild, shaggy exterior, and a body gaunt with famine, may attract public attention and enforce the lessons of a harsh but salutary wisdom.

We have mentioned that the Baptist was brought up in the same wilderness, in which the Essenes practiced their monastic austerities, virtues, and follies. Here then was a most apt occasion for the evangelists and for the Saviour to take some notice of those Jewish monks. Had they deemed monachism a good thing, here were monks, ready made, severely virtuous, and needing but the Christian doctrine to make them pattern-monks for all future ages: Yet were Christ and his apostles as mute concerning them, as if they had been Gymnosophists of India.

We have now reviewed all the examples which the defenders of monachism imagine to exist in the Bible tending to justify the monastic system. The reader is convinced, we trust, that they are of no force whatever.

When a learned monk, who argues in defence of monachism, rejects the whole mass of these Biblical examples,—St. Jerome and all the Fathers, and Bellarmine being in this matter set at naught,—we may presume that the examples are futile. Yet this was done by no less a writer than Father Helyot, in his great History of the Religious Orders.

“It is useless,” says he, in his Introductory Treatise, “to go back to Elijah and Elisha; for all that we read of these prophets and their disciples,—of the Nazarenes, the Rechabites, and of St. John the Baptist, whom St. Jerome calls the first of the anchorites, and St. John Chrysostom calls the prince of the monks, were only the shadow and form of monachism:”—which means that they contained nothing of the substance or reality of monachism in them.

As it is not pretended that either Christ or his apostles established or recommended any form of monastic institution, our argument is complete, and the conclusion is, that *Monachism is not a Scriptural Institution.*

CHAPTER XI.

ASCETISM AMONG CHRISTIANS OF THE EARLY AGES.

We have now presented a sketch of the prevailing systems of religious philosophy among Gentiles and Jews before monachism arose in the church. We have shown how certain dogmas concerning the soul, the body, the material world, and the spiritual beings supposed to inhabit the atmosphere and regions above it, led to ascetism and monkery before our Saviour's advent. We have shown how these same dogmas spread among Greeks and Jews, and then mixed themselves with the doctrines of Christianity in the minds of its early professors. We propose now to trace the growing influence of these heathenish notions in the church from the age of the apostles, until they gave rise to Christian monachism and other extravagances in the third and fourth centuries.

When the reader considers how thickly the countries where the gospel was first preached, were sown with the seeds of ascetism and monkery, he will not be surprised to find that these tares began to spring up with the wheat, even in the apostolic age.

We find in several passages of St. Paul's epistles, evident signs of an ascetic spirit (not approved of by the apostle) among the first converts to Christianity. The obstinate attachment of the Jewish converts to the "beggarly elements" of the ceremonial law and the pharisaical additions to it, was not all that the apostle discerned of a tendency to excess in religious observances among the primitive Christians. There was a disposition to repudiate mar-

riage as unholy, to abstain from pleasant meats, to practice an affected humility and a system of bodily mortifications. These principles and practices he pointedly condemned, as the offspring of a vain and deceptive philosophy.* He foresaw that they would in after times grow up into a complex system of error and superstition. He therefore, in addressing Timothy,† uttered a solemn warning against them, and against the doctrine concerning demons, taught by the heathen philosophers, afterwards adopted by Christians, and introductory, not only to the extravagances of monkery, but also to the worship of human spirits in the character of saints. He also condemned the worship of angelic beings,‡ called demons by the heathen philosophers, thus intimating, that both Jews and Gentiles entertained some false notions respecting celestial beings.

But these warnings were in a great measure unheeded. The tendency to ascetic austerity and superstitious devotion was too strong to be counteracted. The one-sided views of the devotees, made them look only at those principles and those phrases of the Divine Word, which seemed to favor their preconceived notions. In reference to marriage, they caught at what our Saviour said about those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and at St. Paul's qualified recommendation of celibacy.§ They construed these expressions as laying down a rule for Christians at all times and under all circumstances; when in fact, they had reference exclusively to the poverty, distress and persecutions to which the primitive disciples of Christ were exposed, and were merely counsels of prudence to those who were unmarried and had the gift of continence.

It was argued, however, with some plausibility, that St. Paul expressed an absolute preference to celibacy, as a holier state than marriage, though he justified the latter as free from sin.¶ Yet a

* Colossians ii. 8, 18, 23. See M'Knight, Rosenmuller and Loesneri Observations, on the place.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

‡ Col. ii. 18. § Mat. xix. 12. and 1 Corinth. vii. 7—9, 27, 28.

¶ 1 Cor. vii. 32—34, 36, 38.

careful examination of the whole passage will show conclusively, that he founded his advice upon expediency alone, and that he limited it to cases in which a man could exercise continence, while his circumstances would render family cares burdensome and distressing. He expressly referred to the distress of the times and the trouble in the flesh which the married were then liable to,* as the reason why those who innocently could, had better remain unmarried at the time when he wrote. His advice is just such as a prudent man would at any time give to a friend, under like circumstances. St. Paul seeking especially the spiritual good of those whom he addressed, enforces his advice by the consideration, that the unmarried could attend to their religious duties without distraction, whereas they who had the care of families, in circumstances of worldly trouble and distress, would be too much harassed by cares to serve the Lord with a free and cheerful mind.†

But the reader should observe how attentive the apostle is, in giving this advice, to guard against the inference, that there is anything unholy in the matrimonial state or in the enjoyments connected with it, and how he abstains from even suggesting, that a Christian should macerate his body with fasting, or adopt any other monkish austerities, to destroy the appetites which the Creator implanted in our constitution. On the contrary, he takes occasion more than once to condemn ascetic austerities.‡ Especially in writing to Timothy, he disparages “bodily exercise”—that is, ascetic mortifications of the flesh—as unprofitable. He declares marriage to be honorable *in all* and the marriage-bed to be pure.§ No where does any inspired writer intimate, that there is any superior purity or merit in virginity, or that any kind of ascetic practice entitles man or woman to higher rewards in heaven, than those can attain who live piously and virtuously in the world.

But even in the first century the contrary opinion got posses-

* 1 Cor. vii. 26, 28, 40.

† 1 Cor. vii. 32—34.

‡ Colos. ii. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 8.

§ Heb. xiii. 4.

sion of some Christian minds. Influenced by a preconceived opinion to construe St. Paul's language erroneously, some primitive Christians lived unmarried, not merely from considerations of expediency, but from a notion that celibacy was a holier state than matrimony. Others no doubt had correct views on the subject, and abstained from marriage in consequence of "the present distress," either of the Church or of their private circumstances. They feared that if they had families, they would be distracted with worldly cares, and be tempted in the days of persecution to apostatize for the preservation of those whom they loved.

As to the first class, who conceived that virginity was more meritorious than matrimony, many of them, even before the end of the first century, took it into their heads to esteem themselves holier than others, and were puffed up no little with spiritual pride and arrogance, so that they had to be reprov'd by the bishops. As yet bishops had not generally conceived so exalted an opinion of the merits of virginity, as those of after ages; yet even by the close of the first century, some of them appear to have taken up the notion that religious celibacy was in itself better than matrimony.

The notion seems to have been founded on the fact that perpetual virginity is a perpetual mortification of a constitutional appetite, and this requiring no little self-denial, it seemed to indicate great strength of religious principle, and therefore, great merit in the devotee, especially as the sexual appetite is naturally one of the strongest in the human constitution.

There is a natural connection between this and the appetite for food and drink. If the one was to be mortified as an enemy, so should the other be. They were both members of that grand enemy, the body, against whom the war could be most effectually prosecuted by attacking him in his stronghold, the stomach, where all the materials were stored up from which every appetite and carnal pleasure derived their supplies. By the end of the first century, a regular system of fasting, or keeping stations, as they called it, was adopted by many Christians. The principle

gained ground, that all pleasures connected with the body were dangerous to the soul, and should be regarded with jealousy. The figurative language of St. Paul respecting the flesh and spirit, seemed to confirm the notion of the heathen ascetics respecting the evil nature of the body and its senses. The Apostle justly cautioned Christians against excessive indulgence of the pleasures of sense, and admonished them to keep the passions in subjection to the moral law. But whilst he taught the dangerous nature of carnal temptations, he never dreamed of teaching, that the temperate and lawful enjoyment of the divine blessings with which the world is full, could be evil in itself, or dangerous in its consequences.

But the devotees laid hold on the literal sense of his metaphorical expressions respecting the flesh and spirit, overlooking the proper sense and general tenor of his language. The oriental dogma respecting the evil nature of the body, was now fixed in the general mind of both Jews and Greeks. Therefore, a one-sided view was taken of the Apostle's doctrine, and the body condemned as a nuisance. No food or drink was allowed, but such as life and health might require; and no clothing or furniture, but such as might afford a moderate degree of physical comfort.

During our Saviour's ministry his disciples did not fast,* and he severely censured the useless austerities of the Pharisees.† He himself freely partook of whatsoever food and drink were set before him.‡ He condemned long and oft-repeated prayers.§ In short, whilst he enjoined a spiritual service of God, and a reasonable attention to all the duties of religion, he expressed a pointed disapprobation of the ascetic practices of the age, and all excessive devotion, to the neglect of the duties and enjoyments of the world in which we live. The Gospel inculcates temperance, not abstinence, in regard to the pleasures of sense. But to proceed with our historical sketch.

* Matt. ix. 14. † Luke, xviii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 14. Do. vi. 5—18.

‡ Matt. xi. 19, and ix. 11. Luke, xiv. 1, 7, 12, '5.

§ Matt. xxiii. 14, and vi. 7.

We are not to suppose that the germ of ascetism, which we have mentioned as having appeared in the first century, was then much developed, or received a rapid development afterwards. With the exception of some cases of celibacy, founded on the opinion of its superior sanctity, and probably more cases of stated fasting, and many more of a voluntary renunciation of all luxury and all fashionable amusements, it does not appear that Christians adopted a very austere mode of life in the first century. Generally they set apart some days, as they found it convenient, every year, during which they devoted themselves to private fasting, prayer, and meditation on their spiritual concerns. This practice was entirely consonant to the principles of their religion, and might well be imitated more generally than it is by Christian professors in these times of luxurious ease and busy fortune-hunting. But it grew by degrees, among those who aimed at high attainments in sanctity, until it became a habitual exercise of bodily mortification and austere devotion. This was especially the case after the middle of the second century, when the ascetic philosophy of the Gentiles began to have a strong influence upon the sentiments and teachings of the clergy. We see the first manifestations of this influence in the writings of Justin Martyr, who had studied the Greek philosophy before he became a Christian, and whose theology was strongly tinctured with Platonic notions. He flourished about the year one hundred and forty.

When the stricter sort of Christians had once made a perpetual war against their bodily appetites and senses, the next step was to renounce the means by which the appetites and senses might be gratified. For this, too, the aspirants after spiritual perfection imagined that they had scriptural authority. Our Saviour's command to the young ruler, "Go sell that thou hast and give to the poor,"* they understood to be a rule for every one who aimed at Christian perfection; though it was in reality nothing more than a test which our Saviour applied, in order to discover to that young man a secret vice in his character.

* Matt. xiv. 21.

Afterwards, when the oriental doctrines got a deeper hold, some went so far as to make a general rule of our Lord's declaration, that a man must "forsake all that he hath," before he can be Christ's disciple.* Yet they were absurd enough to admit, that a man could be a disciple, though not a perfect one, without giving up all his goods. All such declarations of our Saviour evidently related to the time and circumstances of his personal ministry. He was a persecuted teacher, moving from place to place; and they who would attend upon his instructions,—that is, become his disciples,—must forsake all that they had.

Neander remarks in his Church History, that some converts, when they were baptized, felt such a glow of gratitude and love to the Saviour, that they wished to give him all that they had, and thought that they were doing so when they gave their worldly goods to the poor, or put them into the treasury of the Church. But this was not the only motive which led Christian devotees to renounce their property. After the second century, the notion began to prevail in the Church, that everything adapted to give pleasure to the senses was not only worthless in itself, but injurious to the soul, by withdrawing its affections from heavenly things, and attaching them to the present evil world. Hence the soul must detach itself as much as possible from material things by renouncing earthly possessions. It was imagined, also, that the more earthly good the soul renounced, and sacrificed for heaven's sake, the more of heaven's felicity would God bestow upon it. Like the poet Horace, the Christian ascetic thought,

Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,
A Diis plura feret. Nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto.

The more a man denies to himself, the more will he receive of the Gods. Naked (therefore) I fly to the camp of those who desire nothing.

So, at last, did the Christian ascetics. For a time, they thought it sufficient to lead a retired life, with their friends and Christian

* Luke xiv. 33.

brethren, avoiding the common business and turmoil of the world, spending much of their time alone, in the exercises of fasting and prayer. Many of them, after they had given away their property, gained a frugal subsistence by some kind of simple labor. What they earned above a present supply for their few wants, they gave to the poor. They needed little ; for they had no families ;—ate only the plainest food, and not much of that ;—clothed themselves scantily with a coarse garment or two,—and shunned all soft and pleasant accommodations. They could therefore employ the most of their time in the purgation of their souls, by prayer, meditations and bodily mortifications.

We have already intimated that from the time of Justin Martyr in the year 140, professors of the ascetic philosophy of the Greeks began to enter the Church, and corrupt the Christian doctrine by foreign admixtures. Had they been content to elucidate the religion of Christ by the aid of sound reason and philosophy, they would have done good service ; but instead of this, they incorporated much of their “vain and deceptive philosophy,” as St. Paul characterized it, with the doctrines of the gospel, as part and parcel of the same. Alexandria was the chief radiating point of this Platonic Christianity. Here the Christians had,—as the Jews had had before them,—a celebrated theological school, as the Greeks had also long before had a great university. The Christian school was taught by men of learning and sent forth continually both books and theologians, that spread these corrupt views of Christian doctrine over nearly all the Christian world. Hence the heathen “doctrine of demons,” or evil spirits infesting the human mind, was fully incorporated with what the gospel taught upon the subject, and filled Christian souls with superstitious fancies and fears. The Christian no longer considered himself exposed merely to the evil suggestions of an invisible tempter : he now imagined himself to be perpetually beset by legions of foul fiends, who could at pleasure assume any visible shape, and assault him in a thousand ways. The Pythagorean doctrine of “abstinence from meats,” was by degrees carried to the extreme of a constant fam-

ine, out of hatred to the body as the worst enemy of the soul. The doctrine "forbidding to marry," became the fixed idea, that virginity was second only to angelic purity of nature, and that marriage would be an abominable pollution, if it had not the redeeming merit (as some of the fathers said) of "producing virgins."

But we must not impute all these extravagant notions to the intermixture of the Greek philosophy with the Christian doctrine, although, as we have seen, the Eclectic philosophy had imbibed at Alexandria an additional dose of ascetic principles from the oriental systems. Other influences were at work. Gnosticism, Montanism, and other heresies founded on ascetic principles, although they were condemned by the Church, had extensive influence upon the sentiments of the age, and were both the sign and the effect of a strong tendency in religious minds towards an ascetic austerity of manners. The excessive luxury and other vices of the irreligious, tended also to drive those who feared God into the opposite extreme of a fanatical hatred of the body and of the world.

Whatever causes may have combined with the influence of the Gentile philosophy in producing the effect, the effect itself was wonderful. Before the middle of the third century, the principles of a gloomy ascetism became so powerful, that some Christian devotees began to withdraw themselves from the dwellings and society of men into lonely hiding places about the cities and villages where they had lived. Some of the Gnostic enthusiasts had in the second century adopted a wild sort of monastic life in the mountains, as we learn from a passage in St. Irenæus; but there is not a shadow of evidence that any Catholic Christian had fallen into this sort of extravagance until near the middle of the third century, when a few began to retire from the haunts of men into solitary places. This sort of life had scarcely begun, before the Decian persecution arose and drove multitudes of Christians into the deserts for safety. When in a few years this necessity ceased, some of the refugees returned to their homes; but others, who were inclined to ascetism, remained in the deserts. It seems

not to have been the intention of these incipient monks, whether they became such of choice or of necessity, to continue all their lives in solitude. But many of them never did return to the cheerful haunts of men. Habit made this sort of life pleasant to melancholy minds; and nothing is so productive of melancholy, as the sort of life which they lived in the hot and dreary solitudes of Egypt and Syria, combined with their gloomy notions of religion. Still, many of them would have returned to the society of their friends, if they could, like many of their Hindoo predecessors, have completed the undertaking for which they had fled from the face of human society. They had undertaken the hard task of conquering the demons who infested them, and the harder task of eradicating the appetites and passions of their nature,—all by dint of fasting, prayer, and meditation in solitary places. But the more they hungered and pined away, the more did gloomy fancies—that is, the demons—haunt and worry them; and the more they resisted nature in their dreamy solitude, the more powerfully did nature resist their opposition to her laws, and fill their imaginations with forbidden pleasures. Thus was the war against their physical constitution, like that of Dryden's Alexander against the nations of the earth; it was “never ending, still beginning,—fighting still and still destroying,”—until death ended the strife.

We have arrived at the consummation of Christian monachism. About the time that the great St. Anthony retired into the deserts of Egypt, the primitive seat of Platonic Christianity and Christian monachism, the principles had gotten firm hold of the Christian mind, that the desire of earthly pleasure was evil, that the corporeal senses, and the pleasures derived from them, were evil; that the body itself was a machine for producing sin, and a loathsome prison of the spirit; that as the body was of earthly materials, and derived its pleasures, through the senses, from earthly objects, therefore all the things of the earth that could afford pleasure to the senses, are evil, and consequently to be avoided as a snare to the soul. Therefore cities are evil; human

society is evil ; green fields, verdant woods, refreshing streams, balmy breezes, gay and fragrant flowers, the music of voices and the music of nature, all that was sweet to human senses, was poison to the soul. Impressed with this abominable notion of his Maker's works, the superstitious votary at last fled from all that is "beauty to the eye and music to the ear," into the dreariest deserts, where arid sands, and naked rocks, and noisome beasts and reptiles, only presented themselves to view. There, confined in some miserable den, or roaming naked over burning sands, beneath a fiery sun, he determined to spend his days in punishing his body, fighting with demons, praying to God and dreaming of heaven.

Thus was Christian monkery brought to maturity, about three hundred years after the birth of that Redeemer through whom men are saved by grace, justified by faith, and guided by the law of love, under the government of the God of love. Compared with the law of Moses, the Saviour's yoke is easy, and his burden is light. But through the influence of a vain and deceitful philosophy, a yoke and a burden were laid upon the Christians of a superstitious age, so oppressive, that the Mosaic law was light and easy in comparison.

CHAPTER XII.

SCATTERED NOTICES CONCERNING VIRGINITY, ASCETISM, &c.,
COLLECTED FROM THE EARLY FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

To confirm the preceding statement respecting the growth of ascetical principles and practices in the Church during the early ages, we shall now give the reader some extracts from the Fathers, expressive of the opinions and practices of their times.

Few Christian writings of the first century have come down to us, except those of the Apostles and Evangelists. Few others were written, and they were generally very short. The longest piece that has any evidence of genuineness, is a work entitled, "The Shepherd," by Hermas, supposed by many to be the Hermas that St. Paul mentions in Romans, xvi., 14. But this is very doubtful. The book was originally written in Greek, but we have it only in a Latin translation, made in ancient times by some unknown author. We cannot judge whether or not the translation was faithfully made. Frauds and forgeries became so common in the Church after the middle of the second century, that one is often at a loss what to think of such writings as this Latin translation of Hermas. There is reason to suspect that some phrases, at least, were foisted in, to give an air of authority to certain practices which began in the Church after the time of Hermas. But we are willing to suppose that the translation is in substance correct.

In the passage from which we are about to quote,* Hermas re-

* Book iii., Similitude v.

presents himself as sitting alone on a mountain, fasting and meditating, when the angel whom he calls the Shepherd appeared, and asked him what he was doing. "I answered, (says Hermas,) 'To-day I keep a station.' He answered—What is a station?' I replied—'It is a fast.'* He said—'What is that fast?' I answered,—'I fast as I have been wont to do.' 'Ye know not,' said he, 'what it is to fast unto God.' 'Hearken,' said he, 'the Lord does not desire such a needless fast; for fasting in this manner, thou advancest nothing in righteousness. But the true fast is this:—Do nothing wickedly in thy life, but serve God with a pure mind, and keep his commandments, and walk according to his precepts; nor suffer any wicked desire to enter thy mind. Keep the commandments of the Lord, and thou shalt be approved. *But, if besides those things which the Lord hath commanded, thou shalt add some good thing, thou shalt purchase to thyself a greater dignity, and be in more favor with the Lord, than thou shouldst otherwise have been. If, therefore, thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord, and shalt add to them these stations, thou shalt rejoice.*' "

The first part of this extract we consider to be conformable to sound doctrine, but the latter part teaches unscriptural sentiments. It attributes direct merit to ascetic exercises, such as fasting, and broaches the idea of meritorious works of supererogation—of gaining favor with God by doing more than his law requires. This is the principle upon which the Romish doctrines of Justification by works, satisfaction for sin, Purgatory, Virginity, Monachism, &c., are founded. The passage admits, however, of an explanation less repugnant to sound doctrine, though still in part at variance with it. Hermas may have meant that fasting is a duty additional to those prescribed in the Ten Commandments, and, if duly observed is a good thing, and will purchase for us a higher reward from God.

* For an explanation of the Stations of the early Christians, see Du Fresne's Glossary, article *Statio*: and Hornbeck's *Miscellanea Sacra*, p. 606. See also on this passage, Osborne on the Errors of the Early Fathers, p. 148.

We can heartily recommend the following rule which the Shepherd of Hermas gives for fasting :

“ *Having performed what is before written—(that is, kept the commandments,) the day on which thou fastest thou shalt taste nothing but bread and water ; and computing the quantity of food which thou dost usually eat upon other days, thou shalt lay aside the value thereof and give it unto the widow, the fatherless and the poor.*”

It was customary in early times for Christians to keep two weekly stations or fastdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. When this rule began to be observed cannot be exactly determined : but certainly not in the first century,—probably not until the latter part of the second. Hermas wrote about the close of the first century.

Besides the merit which he ascribed to fasting, we discover in him a tendency to ascetism in other particulars. Not only does he inveigh against luxurious living, which he might do by apostolical authority ; but he goes farther, and censures the possession of wealth, as incompatible with a good Christian life. “ They who are rich in this world (says he) *unless their riches be pared off*, cannot be made profitable unto the Lord :”—And he exhorts Christians “ to procure no more than what is necessary and sufficient for them,” and not “ to buy houses and lands with their money, because all such things shall perish with this present time,” but to spend their wealth in works of benevolence.* So far as he enjoins moderation in our desires for worldly possessions and a spirit of benevolence in the use of them, he is scriptural ; but there is in his principles an evident leaning towards an austere mode of life, and a renunciation of earthly goods as unprofitable because they are temporal, and even injurious because they are pleasant.

He does not condemn marriage, but he expressly attributes superior merit to celibacy. “ I said unto the angel, If a husband

* For these passages see Book I. Vision 3. and Book. II. Commands 4 and 12.

or wife die, and the surviving party marry again, does he sin in so doing? He that marries (said the angel) sins not; howbeit if he remain single, he shall thereby gain to himself great honor before the Lord.”* Here is no reference, as in St. Paul’s advice in 1 Corinthians, to any distress as making celibacy expedient. Abstinence from marriage without regard to circumstances is considered as meritorious before the Lord—no doubt for the reason that it is an austerity, a mortification of the flesh. This is the vital principle of ascetism and monkery.

The book of Hermas was in great repute for a century or two; it was publicly read in many churches, and was thought by some in those times to have been written by divine inspiration. Yet it is, on the whole, a tedious and insipid production. In some parts it is downright silly and utterly unworthy to be ranked among the inspired writings.

In an epistle ascribed to Clement, the first bishop of Rome, who is named by St. Paul (in Philippians iv. 3), we find the following admonitions:—“*Let not him that is pure in the flesh grow proud of it, knowing that it is from another he received the gift of continence.*”

Ignatius, another of the earliest Christian Fathers, in his epistle to Polycarp, bluntly rebukes these self-conceited professors of chastity, male and female:—“*If any man (said he) can remain in a virgin state, to the honor of Christ, let him remain so without boasting; but if he boast he is undone; and if he desire to be more taken notice of than the bishop, he is corrupted.*”

These allusions show very plainly that virginity among Christians, as before among certain heathen devotees, had by the end of the first century begun to be considered by many as meritorious in the sight of God, and that the professors of virginity had begun already to assume airs of superiority over the married working Christians of the time. We shall see the spiritual pride of these celibates swelling higher in after times, and leading to its natural consequences.

* Book III. Similitude 1.

Second Century.

In this century we begin to meet with Christian writers who had studied the Greek philosophy, and we discover at once a mixture of Platonic notions in their Christian theology. The heathen demonology begins to appear. Justin Martyr, who flourished about the year 140, adopted the notion of Philo the Jew, or rather of the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament, that the giants mentioned in the sixth chapter of Genesis were the offspring of angelic beings, called demons by the Greeks. In his First Apology for the Christians, he says :—" Evil demons in ancient times, when they showed themselves to mankind, *debauched women, corrupted boys, and exhibited fearful appearances to men*, who being filled with awe, and not knowing that they were evil demons, called them Gods." Here we find ideas of evil demons such as neither prophets nor apostles taught, but such as were familiar to the heathen mind in the current fables of the Gods.

In the same apology, speaking of the chastity of the Christians in reference to the saying of Christ, that "*some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*," he says, " There are among us many men and women sixty or seventy years old, who became disciples of Christ in their childhood, and have ever since continued pure [that is, virgins], and I can show such persons among all classes and conditions of people.

Next comes Tatian, a disciple of Justin's. In his oration against the Greeks, he contrasts the temperance and chastity of the Christians with the impurity of the heathen Greeks.—" You Greeks say that we play the fool among wives and boys, virgins and old women. But your poetess Sappho was an impudent courtesan, and sang her own wantonness. But all our women are chaste, and our virgins at the distaff utter divine oracles, much more clearly than that girl of yours." He seems to intimate here that the Christian virgins had a sort of prophetic inspiration. Their virginity was supposed to produce in them such a degree of spiritual purity, that they were filled with a divine illumination.

We need not wonder that Tatian should have entertained such a notion ; for after he had written this oration, he set up a sect called Encratites, or Temperate people, who condemned marriage as an impurity, and adopted a strictly ascetic rule of life. This fact, and the prevalence of Gnosticism in the second and third centuries, show the strong bias of religious minds in those days towards an ascetic and flesh-mortifying austerity of manners. We have already seen in chapter ninth how this bias operated to infuse into the Greek philosophy of those times more and more of the ascetic principles and practices of the oriental nations.

For a long time the struggle between the Catholic Christians and the various branches of the Gnostic heresy was severe and doubtful in its issue, especially in Egypt and Syria, where the oriental systems of philosophy had taken deeper root than in Europe.

The foundation of Gnosticism was the ancient Persian and Egyptian philosophy, whose first principles was what is called Dualism, or the doctrine that there are two primary causes of things, the one good and reigning supreme in the highest heavens, the other evil, and contending for the mastery in this lower world.

The Gnostics all held the principle common to the oriental philosophies, that matter is essentially evil, and that the body is the prison of the immortal soul. Hence their hatred of the body and their professed aversion to all earthly pleasures. They held also that the universe is full of various orders of spiritual beings both good and evil ; and that Christ was one of the highest Aeons or good angels of the celestial world, and descended to the earth for the purpose of delivering mankind from the evil influences of material things and from the power of the evil demons who ruled the world.

To these general principles each leader of a Gnostic sect added a number of details according to his fancy, and from them he deduced such practical rules as suited his particular principles or peculiar taste. The most of these leaders adopted a severe system

of ascetical mortification, because they held that the body and its pleasures are evil : several of them rejected marriage altogether, as a pollution of the soul ; but a few gave a loose to sensuality, on the principle that as the soul is of heavenly origin, it cannot be polluted by so vile and foreign a substance as matter, no more than a diamond can lose its purity by the accidental contact of mud.

One is at some loss to conceive how the Gnostic doctrines, many of which were glaringly inconsistent with the teaching of the apostles, could find acceptance with well-meaning, intelligent, and reflecting people, such as many of the Gnostics certainly were. We cannot easily make due allowance for the influence of prevalent notions of philosophy, and of circumstances, all differing so greatly from what we see and feel in our time. But equally strange must it appear to us Protestants in these days, that monkish fanaticism should have taken such strong and lasting hold upon the minds of Catholic Christians, in that branch of the Church which retained in early times the largest portion of true Christianity.

Neander in his *Church History** thus philosophizes upon the character of the age during which Gnosticism prevailed. He remarks that although Gnosticism was a combination of elements drawn from old religious systems ; yet these elements were but the corporeal form ; the peculiar sentiment of the age was its animating principle. Every age has its peculiar stamp of feeling, and this, in times of mental commotion, gives rise to a variety of systems and sects, which have no external connection, yet are all to be traced to the same radical principle. The reigning principle of this age was that of Dualism, or the contest between the divine powers of good and evil.

“ The key-note (says Neander) which governed the sentiments

* *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. I. p. 639. For want of an English translation, we refer to the Second German Edition. For a charitable account of the Gnostic leaders and their doctrines, we refer the reader to Lardner's *Credibility*.

of many a serious mind, was a consciousness of the power of evil,—a feeling that two parties were contending,—dissatisfaction with the present state of being,—a desire to pass the narrow bounds of the earth, and a longing after a higher and better order of things.”

To this profound remark of Neander we will venture to add, that the feeling of which he speaks was caused in a great measure by the declining state of the Roman empire, which—although it maintained its external grandeur,—was decaying in the roots of its prosperity. There was a deep corruption of morals, an oppressive weight of taxation, a failing energy and success in business, and a consequent sinking of the hearts and hopes of the people.

But to return from this digression ;—from a passage in Irenaeus, it would appear that by the year 170, the Marcionites, a Gnostic sect who condemned marriage, practised a sort of monachism.

They had charged the Israelites with having robbed the Egyptians, when they left Egypt under Moses,—and the orthodox Christians of their own times with defiling themselves by commerce with their heathen neighbors.

“ If (says Irenaeus in reply) he who makes these charges glories in his science or [Gnosticism*], separates himself from the company of the unbelievers, and gets nothing from other men, but is simply naked and barefooted, and lives houseless in the mountains, like the animals that eat grass,—shall he be excused, because he does not know the necessity that we are under of dealing with other men.”†

This is a lively description of an anchorite. It clearly indicates what is probable in itself, that these flesh-hating Marcionites, if not other Gnostics also, had among them the same sort of savage monks that afterwards appeared among the Catholic Christians. Hence it is evident that Christian monkery began among the here-

* The Gnostics professed to have the true *Gnosis*, that is, Science or Knowledge of Divine things. Hence the name.

† Irenaeus *Contra Hereseis*. Lib. iv. C. 30. Epiphanius says that Marcian, founder of the sect, was an anchorite. This confirms the fact that the Marcionites practiced monachism.

tics more than a century before the orthodox portion of the Church adopted the institution. The style of contempt with which Father Irenaeus, in the year 175, speaks of this manner of life, shows that monkery was not as yet recognized among the Catholics as existing, or as worthy to exist among Christians.

But the principles which led to monkery were gaining ground in the second century. Athenagoras, contemporary with Irenaeus, says in his Apology for the Christians (§ 33) ; “ Each one among us has his own wife, whom he has married according to law, and whom he uses as a wife, for the sole purpose of having children, and no further. There are also among us both men and women, who have grown old in celibacy, with the hope of a closer union with God. Now if the state of virginity draws us nearer to God, the very thought and desire of carnal pleasure draw us away from him. We therefore avoid those thoughts, and much more the acts themselves : and it is not in word but in deed that we carry out our principle, that *each one should remain in the virgin purity in which he was born, or should limit himself to one marriage ; for a second one is but a decent adultery.*”

Here is a considerable step in advance of the doctrine of the first century. Virginity takes a *far* more elevated stand than marriage, which is barely tolerated as a necessary evil, for the sake of offspring, and is restricted to the utmost. Second marriages are disallowed as virtually if not formally adulterous : and even in the one tolerated marriage, not even a thought of connubial enjoyment beyond the unfortunate necessity of it for the propagation of children, is deemed innocent !

We need not say that the Bible teaches no such sentiments. Second marriages are expressly allowed, and matrimonial enjoyments are subjected to no such unnatural restriction.* Christianity lays no unnatural, arbitrary, and useless restrictions upon human enjoyments. It wages no war against our natural appetites, but subjects them to such wholesome rules as are necessary to prevent evil consequences from the indulgence of them. There is no

* Rom. vii. 3. 1 Corin. vii. 3—5.

reason for the restriction mentioned by Athenagoras, which does not apply with equal force to the appetite for food and drink. According to his principles, we should eat and drink for the sole purpose of sustaining life, repudiating as evil every thought of pleasure from this source. Consistency did at last drive the devotees to this extreme, and the result was monkery.

Theophilus of Antioch lived near the same time. He wrote three books addressed to one Autolyceus. Speaking in the third book concerning the corrupt practices of the Gentiles, he says:—“Far be it from Christians even to think of doing such things, among whom, temperance is present, continence is exercised, monogamy (only one marriage) is kept, chastity is guarded, wrong exterminated, sin eradicated, &c.”

Here again we find ascetism gaining ground: for the Greek phrase [*ἐγκρατεία ασκεῖται*] translated *continence is exercised*, technically signifies that course of bodily mortification and prayer, which the monks afterwards practiced. Monogamy was commended in the first century as preferable to second marriages: now it was enforced as an obligation, upon the principle that a second marriage was but a decent or hidden adultery, as Athenagoras called it. This father seems to have been the inventor of a very subtle reason for calling it so. God made for Adam only one wife, and they two were one flesh. A second marriage therefore breaks this bond of unity by introducing a mixture of other flesh into the compound. The argument has no solidity, for the death of a husband or wife completely and forever destroys the marriage relation between them. They are then in no sense *one flesh*. But Tertullian, some years later, in the true spirit of an old father, took up this sophistical argument, enlarged it, and refined and twisted it in all manner of ways.* These reverend guides of the Church were by no means scrupulous about the use of sophistry. Anything that would serve their turn was welcome.

Our next quotation is from the epistle to Diognetus, usually

* In his Treatise on Monagamy.

printed with Justin's works, but written in a style so different from Justin's as to be evidently the work of another hand. It was probably composed in the second century.

"What the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. It dwells in the body, but it is not of the body. The flesh hates the soul and wars against it, but is unable to injure it. The soul is imprisoned in the body, but preserves it. The soul is ill-used by food and drink, but grows better, &c."

These expressions savor strongly of the oriental philosophy and a superstitious hatred of the body, as an enemy of the soul. But the author writes in so rhetorical a style, that possibly he meant nothing more than an exaggerated statement of St Paul's doctrine concerning the opposition between the flesh and spirit—that is, the good and evil principles in man. But one possessed of the oriental notions now spreading through the eastern churches, would be apt to misinterpret St. Paul's figurative language on this subject, as we think this author did.

Clement of Alexandria lived near the close of the second century. He was a great admirer of the Grecian philosophy, and mixed its doctrines with those of Christianity.

It is remarked by Schroeckh,* that towards the end of the second century, the Ascetics came by Clement and Tertullian to be called *Εὔχαριτες*, in Greek, and *Continentes* in Latin—that is, *Temperate* or *Abstinent* people. Clement says that Continence consists not only in abstaining from venereal pleasures, but in despising all the possessions and pleasures of the world.† "We, therefore, (says he) from love to the Lord and from honesty, embrace continence, sanctifying the temple of the spirit. But he, who, from hatred conceived to the flesh, abstains from conjugal connection and convenient food, is indocile and impious, and continent without reason."

Again he says, "Now concerning those who abhor marriage, St. Paul says, In the last days many shall depart from the faith—

* Christliche Kirchengeschichte, vol. iii. p. 137.

† Stromata, L. I.

forbidding to marry, &c. And again, Let no one seduce you with a voluntary humility and neglecting of the body, &c. Some just men of old brought up children, having lived continently in marriage. Will they reprove the Apostles? Peter and Philip begat children. Philip also gave his daughter in marriage. *He who marries a wife to beget children, ought to exercise continence, that he may not lust after his wife, &c."*

Again, he says, "We admire single marriages as honorable. Concerning second marriages, if you burn, says the apostle, get married"*

These extracts suffice to show that Clement found it necessary to defend the lawfulness of marriage and in certain cases the expediency of second marriages, against a strong party who were disposed to repudiate them. But lest he should seem to concede too much to a corporeal appetite, Clement takes care, like Athenagoras, to lay severe restrictions on its indulgence, even where it may be lawfully indulged.

His condemnation of those who exercise abstinence from hatred to the body indicates the existence of this hatred among the religious people of his time.

On the whole, Clement is less fanatical in his sentiments on the subject before us, than most of his cotemporaries were. Yet he, like all the rest, had a lofty admiration of virginity, considering it as a holier state than matrimony. He is the earliest of the Fathers who taught that Mary the mother of Jesus retained her virginity after the birth of her first-born son. As authority for this doctrine, which made a deal of senseless noise in the Church afterwards, he cites a spurious piece, full of "old wives' fables," called the Protevangelium of James. He often cited spurious gospels and other forgeries of the two first centuries.

Third Century.

Whilst we are at Alexandria, we shall quote a passage from Origen, of the same city, who flourished about 25 years after Cle-

* Same L. III.

ment. Origen was also a Platonist and like Philo the Jew, he adopted an allegorical mode of interpreting the Scriptures, that he might incorporate his philosophical opinions with the doctrines of the Bible.

The passage which we are about to quote is designed to show that virginity was considered as entitling the possessor to a higher degree of heavenly felicity than married persons could attain. In his nineteenth Homily on Jeremiah, Section 4, Origen says :

“ I will venture to give an example of useful deceptions. There are some who thereby exercise chastity and purity, [that is, abstain from marriage] ; and others who thereby exercise monogamy ; the former believing that they are lost if they marry at all : the latter believing that they are lost if they marry a second time. Now it profits the person who is once married, if he or she expect everlasting punishment for marrying a second time, because their deception prevents a second marriage. For, let any one look at the consequences. It is better indeed to live unmarried or in widowhood without being deceived, and with a knowledge of the fact that *the twice-married may partake of a degree of salvation, but not so high a blessedness as one who has lived purely* : yet if this cannot be done, it is better to be deceived in the opinion that the twice-married are lost, and through the deception to live in purity, than to know the truth, and thereby to suffer the disadvantage of being *degraded into the rank of the twice-married.*”

Here the principle is clearly taught, that marriage, and especially a second marriage, is a comparatively impure state, whilst virginity has the merit of raising its possessor to the highest degree of heavenly felicity. But this is not all. Origen here avows the abominable doctrine that useful deceptions—or pious frauds, as they are generally called—are justifiable, when they promote true religion, or what the deceiver may happen to think is beneficial to his dupes.

This immoral and mischievous principle was adopted by the Christian Fathers from the heathen philosophers, who considered the ignorant and unthinking multitude incapable of being guided

by philosophical truth and reason ; hence they deemed it necessary and proper to influence their minds by such false and superstitious notions as were best adapted to inspire them with salutary fear of the Gods and of future punishment for their crimes.

Brucker, in his *History of Philosophy*, when speaking of the Eclectics or New Platonists (Sect. xvi.) says, that the Egyptian priests—and to some extent those of other nations—held, that pious fraud and lying are justifiable, when they are useful to religion. “It was a saying of Timaeus Locrus, that as we heal bodies by certain medicines, so we may coerce minds to good by false speeches, when they are not affected by true ones. Even Plato was not averse to this principle. He allows princes especially to deceive and lie for the public good. The New Platonists gloried in these teachers and followed their example. What wonder then if they endeavored to sustain a falling superstition by fables and fictions. This they did by both feigned miracles and supposititious books. These philosophers and the Christian teachers of these times contended with one another in the use of these frauds”—each party trying to make the most out of these knavish impositions.

One would suppose that St. Paul’s emphatic condemnation of the principle—Let us do evil that good may come,* would have deterred the Christian Fathers from resorting to dishonest means for the promotion of Christianity, which needed no aid from falsehood, and which taught a morality inconsistent with all manner of hypocrisy and fraud. But neither apostolic denunciation nor Christian consistency, could deter the corrupt teachers of an already corrupted Christianity from using fraudulent means for the promotion of what they conceived to be useful ends. In imitation of the heathen priests and philosophers, they made use of pretended visions, revelations and miracles, as well as forged writings, to impose on the credulous multitude, when they had a purpose to serve, whether it was to convert heathen unbelievers, or to establish some corrupt innovation in the Church, such as

* Romans iii. 5—8.

monachism, saint-worship, relic-worship, purgatory, and transubstantiation. We venture to say, that, since the creation of the world, there have never been among heathen nations more falsehoods propagated for religious purposes, than there were in the corrupted Church of our blessed Saviour from the rise of monachism in the fourth century, for the space of twelve hundred years, during the dark reign of Popish superstition. The reader will see in the following lives of some of the primitive monks only the *modest beginning* of this system of religious imposture. Yet if he has not previously read some of these ecclesiastical romances, he will be struck with wonder at the unprincipled boldness of their *sainted* authors and the stupid credulity of the believing multitude. But let him recollect, that the venerated Fathers of the fourth century only carried out Origen's principle of "useful deceptions," and quieted their consciences with the belief that "the truth of God more abounded through their lies to his glory," or if not "the truth of God," yet something else, which they supposed it would be useful to establish under that name.

Since the great Reformation under Luther, this system of imposture has been checked, but even to this day it has been frequently resorted to, chiefly among the Roman Catholic priests and monks, who "hold the tradition of the Fathers," and to some extent even among Protestant ministers, who in their writings and discourses too often conceal or discolour the facts of ecclesiastical history, fearing lest the undisguised truth should injure the cause of religion. We shall give those facts, so far as they come within the range of our subject, without concealment or disguise. Our divine Christianity needs no fraud nor concealment for its vindication; on the contrary, it does need a full exposure of the truth of history, for its purification from the inventions of men. But let us proceed with our quotations. We take a little more from Origen.

In his work against Celsus, (Lib. V.), Origen says, "We, when we abstain from flesh, do it to chasten the body and reduce it to servitude, wishing to extinguish our earthly members

(passions)—whoring, impurity, lasciviousness, depraved affections, that we may put to death our corporeal actions.”

On this extract we have two remarks to make ; first, that like the Hindoos and Boodhists, all the Christian ascetics abstained from flesh and from wine, and most of them from marriage ; and secondly, that the design of this abstinence was to extinguish the carnal appetites and passions.

In a book of uncertain date and authorship, but composed probably about this time, called *The Apostolical Canons*, we find (in Canon 51) the following rule ;—“ If any bishop, priest, or deacon abstain from marriage, flesh, and wine, not for (*ασκησιν*) exercise, but from abhorrence, forgetting that all things are very good, and that God made man male and female, but blaspheming calumniates the Creator, let him be either corrected or deposed and cast out of the Church.”*

From this rule as well from the extract which the reader has seen from Clement of the same import, it evidently appears that there was a strong tendency in the Church toward an excessive abstinence from all corporeal pleasures, not only for *exercise* in piety, but from a hatred of the body as an evil thing, and an enemy of the soul, insomuch that stringent discipline was necessary to keep it in check. We see in this tendency the influence of that Oriental philosophy of which we have spoken in the preceding chapters.

About this time excessive fasting became common among the *ascetics* or exercisers. Eusebius, the Church historian, (*Lib. V.*, cap. 24,) quotes Irenaeus as saying, that some thought they ought to fast one day at a time, some two days, and some even more. But Dionysius of Alexandria says, that the ascetics fasted, some two days, some four, and some six days ; showing that in his time fasting was carried to great excess in Egypt, where monachism began. It was this practice of much fasting, that gave these persons the name of ascetics. This Dionysius, was

* See Bingham's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*. Book VII., ch. 3.

bishop of Alexandria, about the year 250, just before ascetism began to ripen into monachism.

Eusebius relates in his Church History, (Lib. IV., c. 23,) that Dionysius wrote an epistle to the Gnosians, in which he exhorted their bishop, Pynitus, "not to impose the heavy burden of virginity upon the brethren as *a necessary thing*, but to have regard to the infirmity of most people." Pynitus wrote back in answer, that "he received his advice with great respect," but he exhorted him in turn, that "he should at last administer strong meat, and and by a second epistle of more perfect instruction, so feed his people, that they would not always continue to use the mere milk of the word, and insensibly grow old in the nurture of infancy."

Eusebius remarks on this answer, that Pynitus showed in it not only a right faith, and a due care for his flock, but eloquence and skill in divine things.

The notion was now spreading in the Church, that the Apostolic permission to marry was merely a temporary concession to the weakness of babes in Christ, and that Christians would never attain the stature of full-grown saints, until they renounced marriage altogether. This was the opinion of Pynitus at least, and this we think was what he meant in his respectful answer to Dionysius, when he exhorted that prelate to administer strong meat to the Gnosians, instead of the soft, milky doctrine of his first epistle.

These extracts from the Alexandrian Fathers are sufficient to show the progress of ascetical opinions and practices in that part of the Church, down to the middle of the third century, when monachism was about to come forth in Egypt, of which Alexandria was the great capital.

Let us now turn back to the beginning of the century, and see what opinions on these subjects prevailed about the city of Carthage, the capital of the African provinces, far west of Alexandria. Here Latin was the language of the country, and here we find the earliest Latin Fathers, whose works have come down to us. The

first is Tertullian, who flourished about the year 200, that is, twenty or thirty years before Origen.

He was a vehement advocate of ascetic austerity, an uncompromising monogamist, a rigid exactor of matrimonial abstemiousness—no Pythagorean philosopher or Greek father having imposed severer restrictions on married people—and an ecstatic admirer of virginity, as the nearest approach to angelic perfection, and the surest guaranty of angelic felicity in Heaven. He would have made a capital saint of the Catholic Church, had he lived a hundred years later, when his gloomy ideas of religion would have been considered orthodox. But he was not satisfied with what in his day was considered a Catholic degree of ascetic sanctity. He joined the sect of Montanus; which, esteeming its founder to be the Paraclete, or Comforter, promised by our Saviour, went as far as he desired, in the flesh-tormenting severity of its rules. Therefore Tertullian, is not Saint Tertullian. Nevertheless, he is good authority, admitted on all hands, for the facts which we are investigating. Most of his writings were composed while he was yet a good Catholic.

Like the Fathers generally of the Third and Fourth Centuries, he esteemed the merit of virginity as the highest of human merits. He exalted it above the merits of fasting and other mortifications of sense. So did the Fathers in general, probably because it was the most difficult to attain, and required the aid of all the rest. Virginity could not generally be maintained in its purity without a rigid system of corporeal maceration, exposure to the rudest hardships, nocturnal vigilance; in short, the whole corps of ascetic mortifications;—so to thin the blood, attenuate the flesh, enfeeble the nerves, dry up the marrow, and exhaust the constitution, as to destroy this natural appetite, and to conquer both the demon without and the demon within. No wonder then if this was deemed the most glorious of spiritual achievements; and if many who had the form of virginity were destitute of its power, that is, of the spiritual purity which it was supposed to infuse into the soul of man. Experience demonstrated even in Tertullian's

time, that the state of virginity might exist, and yet the heart be as full of worldly vanity and unholy passion, as if those angels on the earth had been married! It was found too, that a large portion of professed virgins, were virgins only in name, and that indignant nature often impelled them to do worse than to marry!

What mortified Tertullian, Jerome, and other Fathers, more than the misconduct of the virgins, was the fact, that the institution of virginity, which *ought* to have been the peculiar glory of the Church, originated among the heathen idolators, long ages before the birth of Christ. Tertullian thus expresses his mortification, in his treatise on Monogamy, (Sect. xiii.)

“Since Satan affects to imitate the mysteries of God, it will be a shame to us, if we be slow to present that contenance to God, which some present to the Devil, either by virginity or by perpetual widowhood. We know the virgins of Vesta, and of Juno, in a town of Achaia,—of Apollo at Ephesus,—and of Minerva at several places. We know continent men also, particularly of the Egyptian God Apis. The African Ceres has women too, who, having renounced their marriage, will afterwards avoid the touch of a man, and refuse to kiss even their own sons. *See how the Devil, next to luxury, invented a destructive chastity!*”

He elsewhere complains that the Devil had anticipated the Church in other matters. “The Devil (says he,) who makes it his business to pervert the truth, imitates the divine sacraments by idolatrous mysteries. He baptizes some as believers and followers of his; promises them purification from sin, by baptism; and if I rightly remember, the god Mithras makes the sign of the cross upon the foreheads of his worshippers. And then too, he limits his chief priest to one marriage, and has also his virgins and his male professors of continence.”*

We remark by the way, that St. Jerome, in his treatise against Jovinian, gives a long and learned account of the honors paid to virginity among the heathen, and observes afterwards, that true virginity suffers no prejudice from the fact that the Devil’s virgins

* De Prescriptione Hereticorum, § XL.

imitated it. He says also in some part of his works, that the virgins of heretics ought to be deemed whores.

Tertullian says in his Treatise on the Resurrection, (§ 8):—“They are acceptable sacrifices to God, which the flesh offers by its own suffering;—I mean (says he) those conflicts of the soul, fasting, abstinence from flesh and wine; and the *dirtiness* annexed to it;—also virginity, widowhood, monogamy, moderation in conubial indulgences [that is, as he says elsewhere,—limited to the necessity of the case.]*

We shall take but one more extract from Tertullian. It is from his Treatise on the Veiling of Virgins, (§ 14.) It shows that the young women who professed to consecrate their virginity to God were much glorified by the Church, and, as might be expected, were made vain by the honors bestowed upon them. They were fond of showing themselves—went publicly unveiled—and did not neglect to set off their persons to advantage. Tertullian thus censures them.—“Where there is glory there is solicitude [to avoid vanity]; where there is solicitude, there is constraint [on one’s inclinations]; where there is constraint, there is necessity [for its exercise]; where is necessity, there is infirmity [of nature.] Deservedly therefore, when virgins do not cover their heads, and thus for the sake of glory expose themselves to temptations, they are compelled afterwards to hide their shame.† It is vanity, not religion, that leads them to profess virginity; sometimes it is the belly, their god; they desire a free maintenance; *for the brethren gladly receive and support virgins.* They are publicly presented to the pastor of the church and consecrated;‡ their good deed is proclaimed; they are loaded by the brethren

* We give in Tertullian’s Latin a sentiment which we do not choose to translate. *Etiam matrimonii secreta maculosa.* See his Address Ad Uxorem, Lib. II. § 3.

† *Ventres tegere coguntur infirmatatis ruiná.*

‡ This disproves the opinion of Bingham and others, that Tertullian *does not* here speak of professed or consecrated virgins of the Church. He does, most explicitly; but some Protestant writers are fain to hide such disgraceful facts. They have not forgotten Origen’s “useful deceptions”

with honors and gifts. If one falls from the grace of virginity, she still appears with head uncovered, and makes no change in her dress, lest she should betray her condition. These apostates still claim to be virgins, and will not confess, until they are betrayed by the cries of their new-born children! Virgins of this sort are easy of conception and parturition, and bear children very like their fathers! Such are the crimes that spring from a constrained virginity! Then the desire of being seen and of pleasing the men does not become a virgin. However good her intentions may be, there is unavoidable danger in her exposing herself to the gaze of many eyes; whilst, at the same time, her vanity is tickled by the fingers that point at her,—whilst she is too much loved, and is warmed by the constant embraces and kisses of the brethren and sisters.”—Thus far Tertullian. We remark that the warm salutations just mentioned were customary in the Church, and were not confined to the virgins, though naturally somewhat warmer in their case.

The passage just quoted gives us some insight into the much glorified institution of virginity in the Church about the year 200.

We shall obtain a farther knowledge of the subject from the extracts that we shall now take out of the writings of Cyprian, the good bishop of Carthage, who lived about 50 years after Tertullian. We shall first extract some passages from his book on the dress of virgins.

“Virgins (says Cyprian,) are the flower of the ecclesiastical tree,—the glory and ornament of spiritual grace,—a joyful race—the perfect and incorrupt work of praise and honor,—the image of God’s holiness,—the most illustrious portion of Christ’s flock. The glorious fecundity of mother Church rejoices in them, and flourishes through them; and the more copiously virginity adds to her number, the more does mother’s joy increase.”

Again, near the end of the book, addressing the virgins, he says:—“Since there are many mansions with the Father, one must afford better entertainment than the rest. You seek that best one, and by castrating the desires of the flesh, you will obtain

in Heaven the reward of your *superior grace*. All indeed who come to the divine washing of baptism, by sanctification put off there the old man by the grace of the salutary washing, and being renewed by the Holy Ghost, are purged from the filth of the old contagion, by the second birth; but a greater sanctity and truth of the second birth belongs to you, *who have now no desires of the flesh and the body.*"

Such are some of the high-flown laudations, which Cyprian, like the other Fathers of these times, pours out upon the virgins of the Church. It should be observed that neither he nor the rest inform us that the virgins were distinguished from other Christians by superior virtue in a single particular, unless it was their virginity. This was the sole distinction by which they were to be raised to the highest and best mansion in Heaven.

Whether these angelic beings excelled other Christians in other respects, will appear from what this admiring Father himself gives us to understand of their behavior. From many passages of the same book, in which he so bepraises them, it is evident that they still had all the passions and infirmities of their sex. He told them that their hardest struggle was to tame the flesh; but many of them appear not to have girded themselves for the contest.

Many of them were very fond of dress and personal ornaments. They delighted especially in gay-colored clothes, against which he argues that God did not make scarlet and purple sheep, nor dye wool with the juice of herbs and shell-fish, nor did he set precious stones in gold, nor string pearls together for necklaces. He says that the fallen angels taught these arts; and taught women also to paint their cheeks and to draw circles of dark-red coloring round their eyes. He justly admonishes both virgins and wives, to abstain from spoiling their natural beauty, by such artifices. But he ought to have given a better reason.—“Dares any one (he asks,) change that which God made? They lay impious hands upon God’s work, who undertake to reform and transfigure it;

not knowing that what is naturally produced is God's work, but whatsoever is changed is of the Devil."

The very pen with which Cyprian wrote those words, might have furnished his gay virgins with an apt retort. But he is wittily severe upon these virgin belles of the Church. "Are you not afraid (says he,) that when you rise from the dead, your Maker will not know you!—and that he will shut you out of Heaven with this strong rebuke:—You are none of my work; you have not my image; you have stained your skin with falsifying drugs; your hair is adulterated with dye; your face is disguised with falsehood; *your figure is transformed*;* your look is strange; you cannot see God when your eyes are not such as God made them, but are infected by the Devil. You have followed him; you have imitated the red-colored eyes of the old serpent; and having been decked out by your enemy, you shall burn with him."

After this severe rebuke, Cyprian warns these holy virgins from attending marriage-feasts, at which he says there was commonly a license inconsistent with a chaste and sober morality; and he makes no exception in favor of Christian weddings. The customs of which he speaks, seem to have been common to all classes of people in the diocese of Carthage, and probably throughout the Roman provinces.

"Some virgins (he says,) are not ashamed to be present when people are married, and to mix in the wanton sports and conversations of the occasion; and are observed to be present at the filthy speeches and drunken carousals, by which lust is inflamed, and the passions of the married couple are excited."

St. Chrysostom gives a similar account of the marriage customs of the Eastern provinces about the end of the fourth century. He says that marriages were celebrated with dances, immodest songs, hymns in honor of Venus, and representa-

* From this it would seem, that like our modern ladies of fashion, they endeavored to improve, by artificial stuffing and padding, the form which God had given them.

tions of adulteries. Prostitutes were invited to the entertainment; and after the feast, the guests, most of them intoxicated, led about the town the bride splendidly arrayed and painted, and sang scandalous ballads, offensive to Pagans as well as Christians. We would fain believe, that even in Constantinople, such abominable practices occurred only among the more depraved classes of the population.

To attend such marriage feasts was bad enough for consecrated virgins; but some of them did even worse: they were so immodest as to frequent the mixed baths, where the two sexes went naked into the water together. He supposes a virgin to excuse herself by saying that she went purely to bathe, not to see nor to be seen. But he justly rejects all excuse for so indecent a custom. We know that allowance should be made for the customs of different times and countries, and that practices deemed by us immodest, may not be so considered in a different state of society and manners; yet nature itself must condemn a virgin who would expose herself to the temptations of mixed bathing and of licentious songs and jests at a wedding feast.

Upon the whole, it appears that these consecrated brides of Christ—as they were called, were many of them in ill repute. “The Church (says Cyprian) often complains of her virgins, and groans at the infamous stories that are told of them. Thus the flower of the virgins is withered; the honor of continency and purity is destroyed; and all their glory and dignity are profaned.”

But we have not yet mentioned the worst of all the infamous things which resulted from this institution of virginity, combined with the celibacy of the clergy, which had now become general.

In his sixty-second epistle, Cyprian mentions a practice, dishonorable alike to the petted virgins of the Church, and to some of the clergy. Pomponius, to whom the epistle was addressed, had consulted Cyprian about a case of this sort:—“You ask me (says Cyprian) to write you my opinion of what should be done with those virgins, who, after firmly resolving to live chastely in

their virgin state, were caught lying in bed with men, one of whom you say was a deacon ; and who confessed that they had slept with the men, but affirmed that they were yet pure virgins."

As a general rule, he advises that virgins should not be permitted to live in the same house with [unmarried] men ;—much less should they be permitted to sleep with them. He gives strong reasons for his advice : we only wonder that he should think any reasoning necessary to justify such advice.

The practice of unmarried men—some of them clergymen—and consecrated virgins living together, seems to have prevailed to a considerable extent, even at this early period ; but then the parties professed that there was no harm in it, seeing that it was all the while a chaste familiarity, a purely spiritual conjunction !

" Let such be separated (says Cyprian) whilst yet they innocently may. *We have seen many grievous falls spring from this practice ;* and through these illicit and dangerous connections, we have, to our sorrow, seen *a great many virgins corrupted.*"—From these words of Cyprian we can easily infer how common the practice was. If so many virgins, to Cyprian's knowledge, gave signs of having been corrupted—what numbers of them must have practiced this sort of concubinage !

He advised also that the men who had offended in this case, should be restored to the communion of the Church, upon due repentance and separation from their virgin concubines. As to these sweet virgins,—“ the flower of the ecclesiastical tree ”—he advised that they should separate from their chaste paramours, and that they should be diligently inspected by the midwives. If found to have the physical symptoms of virginity, they might be admitted to the communion immediately, although he had just before expressed the opinion that the inspection by midwives was not a reliable test. How indulgent this good Father was to “ the brides o' Christ.” Had other females, married or unmarried, been guilty of such licentious behavior, we think that his sense of what was due to the honor of Christ, would have made him anathematize them to all intents and purposes.

We would fain say no more upon this nauseous subject. But, since we have undertaken to give a true history of those opinions and practices in the Church which led to monachism or were associated with it—and since we deem it important that the reader should have a just view of the state of religion in the Church, when monachism was in its prime, virginity and celibacy in the highest estimation, and when saint-worship and relic-worship and other corruptions of Christianity were coming forth—we must bespeak the reader's attention to a further development of this never-enough-to-be-praised institution of virginity.

One might be inclined to believe that the disgraceful practices of which we have spoken were confined to Carthage, where Tertullian and Cyprian lived, and to the third century in which they lived. But this was far from being the case. Celibacy led to the same evil practices throughout the Church, and throughout the long ages of monkish austerity, priestly celibacy, and Popish domination. We shall confine our remaining quotations to works which were written in the

Fourth Century.

It was in this century that monachism was established and many of the corruptions of Christianity were introduced.

We shall first quote a passage from St. Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Asia Minor. It is in his LVth Epistle, addressed to Paregorius, a priest, who had kept a professed virgin in his house, and attempted to justify himself to Basil. The bishop answers him in this Epistle. Among other things, he says: "We are not the first who have decreed that [unmarried] women should not live with men. Read the canon published by our Fathers in the Council of Nice, which plainly enacts that there should be no [συνελεξαυτες] women kept in a man's house, who are not his near relations. The honor of celibacy consists in separation from women. Wherefore, if any one who professes it, does what married people do with their wives, it is evident that he follows vir-

ginity only in name, when in fact he abstains not from indecent pleasures.”

This priest being 70 years old, Basil acquitted him of sinful intercourse with the woman; but, for the sake of example, required him, under the penalty of excommunication to put her away into a monastery.

What we have chiefly to remark on this passage of Basil is, that he informs us of a decree of the General Council of Nice, early in the fourth century, forbidding what must then have been a not unfrequent custom of the unmarried clergy—namely, the keeping of what were called *privately-introduced* women in their houses. But in vain did Councils forbid and Fathers censure a practice, which naturally grew out of the celibacy of the clergy and the professed virginity of young women. The practice continued to prevail to a scandalous extent, as will appear from what we shall now take from the writings of the most learned of the Latin Fathers, and, if we except Origen, of all the Fathers, whether Greek or Latin. This was Hieronymus, or Jerome, as he is commonly called. He was educated at Rome, resided a while in Gaul—travelled extensively in the East, resided again in Italy, and finally settled in Palestine, where he wrote the most of his voluminous works. He was, therefore, well acquainted with the state of the Church in both the East and the West. He flourished about the year four hundred, that is, one hundred and fifty years after the time of Cyprian.

Monachism was now in the full tide of successful experiment, and St. Jerome was a fiery advocate of the system, and an unsparing assailant of all who dared to oppose it, as some yet dared to do. Virginity was an object of his enthusiastic and never-ceasing admiration. Most of the one hundred and fifty epistles, found in his extant works, have monachism and virginity for their subjects. Many were addressed to professed virgins and widows professedly opposed to marrying a second time. Much of his anxiety was to keep these holy pets of the Church in order. The frequent exhortations, advices, cautions and rebukes, which

he administered to them, prove that in his time, as well as in preceding ages, these terrestrial angels were difficult to manage, or at least found it difficult to manage themselves, and often acted like creatures of mere flesh and blood. Indeed, from his invectives against many of them, it appears that they were worse than even St. Cyprian's virgins.

In his long epistle to Eustochium, a favorite virgin, he exhorts her constant vigilance, fasting and avoidance of the sight of men, in order to subdue the natural desires of the constitution ; and to show how difficult this was, he tells her of his own experience in warring against nature. Like other monks of his time, he had fled to the deserts, that he might get away from all tempting objects.

“ Oh how often (says he,) when I was in that vast desert, scorched by the sunbeams, which affords a horrible dwelling-place to the monks, did I imagine myself to be amidst all the delightful scenes and luxuries of Rome ! When I awoke from this day-dream, I would find myself sitting alone in the desert, and my soul was filled with bitterness. My limbs were covered with rough sackcloth ; my shrivelled skin was black like an Ethiopian's. Day by day, my tears flowed and my groans broke forth ; and when, in spite of my efforts to keep awake, an oppressive sleep overpowered my senses, my naked bones, that scarcely hung together, fell clattering upon the ground. I say nothing of my food or drink ; even when sick, monks drink nothing but cold water, and anything cooked is to them an unusual luxury. Yet, even I, *who, from fear of hell*, had condemned myself to such a prison, and whose only companions were scorpions and wild beasts, *yes, even then, I often thought myself surrounded by choirs of beautiful girls, charming me with their songs and dances. Whilst my face was pale from fastings, and my emaciated body was as cold as a corpse, my soul yet burnt with desires and boiled with the flames of lust.* Therefore, when all other help failed me, I threw myself at the feet of Jesus, I washed them with my tears, I wiped them with the hairs of my head ; and I subjugated my re-

bellious flesh by fasting week after week. Day and night I cried aloud, nor ceased to beat my breast, until the Lord rebuked me, and I became calm again."

"Then I grew afraid of my little cell, as if it were a witness of my thoughts. Angry at myself, and resolute, I started forth, and all alone penetrated the deepest recesses of the desert. Wherever I met with the hollow of a valley, the ruggedness of a mountain, or a precipice of rocks, there was my place of prayer; there was the penitentiary of my miserable flesh; and as the Lord is my witness, after many tears, and after long and steadfast looking up to heaven, I seemed to myself at times to be among bands of angels, and then I would joyfully sing—*we will run after thee for the odor of thy ointments.*"

Such in substance is Jerome's account of his hermit life. It is a picture of fanatical austerity, such as we often read of in the lives of *The Fathers of the Desert*.

Having thus warned Eustochium of the extreme difficulty of suppressing our natural desires—he afterwards supposes her to object, that, as she was of a noble family, and had been brought up in the delights of luxury, she could not live by such severe rules of abstinence. He answers, "Well then, live according to your own law, if you cannot submit to God's. Think not, however, that God, the Creator and Lord of the Universe, takes any pleasure in the rumbling of our intestines, the emptiness of our stomachs, and the scorching of our lungs with the hot air of the desert:—but observe, *chastity can in no other way be safe.*"—Again he admonishes her that "*even at home, not a face can be looked at with safety.*"

Then he warns her by the example of other virgins. "I am ashamed (says he) to mention *how many virgins are ruined every day*; how many children of her bosom mother Church loses; upon what lofty stars [virgins] the proud enemy sets his throne; in how many rocks the serpent makes holes for his dwelling place. You may see most widows, before they marry again, hiding their evil conscience only with a deceiving robe, until their manifest

pregnancy and the cries of their infants expose them: but until then they walk with outstretched neck and mincing steps. Others produce barrenness or destroy the foetus with drugs." Then, after speaking of the full feeding and drinking of others, he says;—"These are the sort who walk forth in the most public manner, and by sly winks draw after them crowds of young men. They dress only in thin purple robes, tie their hair loose that it may fall over their shoulders, over which a mantle is loosely thrown. They wear short sleeves and thin slippers, and go tottering as they walk. And this is all their virginity! Let them have flatterers of their own sort that they may perish more profitably. As to ourselves, we are willing to displease them."

"I blush to say it; but alas! it is true. Oh! whence came that pest into the Church—of clergymen keeping mistresses?—unmarried women, not called wives? Nay, whence this new sort of concubines? I will go further;—Whence these one-man whores? They occupy the same house, the same chamber, often the same bed; yet they complain that we are suspicious. The brother forsakes his virgin sister for another; the virgin spurns her unmarried kinsman, and seeks a brother of a different family; though the brother and sister both pretend to have the same purpose of living in unmarried purity; yet they seek spiritual comfort in a connection with others, that they may have carnal intercourse at home."

The professed purpose of these people to live in unmarried purity, proves that they were not merely single persons; they had made profession of perpetual virginity, or of celibacy at least, from religious motives.

Sulpicius Severus in his first Dialogue, of which the reader will find a translation in a subsequent part of this work, quotes a part of the foregoing passage. Speaking of St. Jerome, he says; *"But how truly and forcibly has he argued concerning the familiarities of the monks and even of the clergy, with the virgins!"* For this reason he is said not to be liked by certain persons whom I shall not name. These men are said to be enraged when they

read the following words in that little work:—"The virgin despises an unmarried man who is a real brother; she seeks a connection with one who is not of her own family." From this passage of Severus it is evident that the same infamous practice of which Jerome spoke was not uncommon in Gaul, where Severus lived and wrote.

St. Chrysostom, cotemporary with Jerome, wrote two treatises against this practice—but we shall make no more extracts in relation to it. We have given facts and authorities enough to prove beyond controversy, that the celibacy of the clergy and the monks, and the institution of religious virginity among females, led to the most shameful practices, and that, instead of promoting holiness, it occasioned the most scandalous violations of the Divine law and of common decency. If, in these latter days, there is less *appearance* of the same scandalous practices resulting from the same causes, it may still be a question, whether this is a sign of purer morals, or of more cautious and ingenious methods of concealment.

Before we leave this famous order of ecclesiastical virgins, we must present the reader with another trait in their character, as drawn by St. Augustine. This celebrated Father, in his commentary on Psalm xcix. says;—" *You find consecrated virgins (sanctimoniales) who are disorderly. Many of them do not stay at home, but go from house to house, tattling, talking proudly, and getting drunk.* If they be virgins, what avails the chastity of their flesh, when their minds are corrupt? Humble marriage would be better than such self-conceited virginity. If they were married, they would not have the name of virgins to swell the pride of their hearts, and they would have a bridle to restrain their waywardness."

CHAPTER XIII.

OF EGYPT AND SOME ADJACENT COUNTRIES, IN WHICH CHRISTIAN MONACHISM FIRST PREVAILED.

CLIMATE and other physical circumstances have great influence on the feelings, habits, and institutions, of mankind. Egypt, in which Christian monachism arose, is a country of such uncommon characteristics, and was anciently so remarkable for the superstition of its inhabitants, that we are led to inquire, whether its geographical character could account, in any measure, for the early rise and rapid increase of monkery within its boundaries. We shall, for the general illustration of our subject, and for the particular illustration of this point of enquiry, give a descriptive sketch of Egypt and some other countries in which monachism prevailed in early times.

1. *The most extensive deserts of the earth* are found on the Eastern Continent, stretching in an unbroken, but somewhat irregular zone, from the Western coast of Africa eastwards through Egypt, Arabia and Persia, to the valley of the River Indus,—a space of not less than 5,000 miles in length. These immense tracts of dry barrens lie between the 18th and 34th parallels of latitude, but do not occupy the whole of this broad interval; for wheresoever a system of high mountains attracts copious rains, or fresh-water streams irrigate the lands, there the labors of agriculture are rewarded by good harvests. Rains, more or less, fall likewise on some favorably-situated plains, and pro-

duce some pasturage on which flocks and herds can be kept. But over a vast extent of these deserts, particularly in Africa, no rain ever falls, or if any, yet too little to cause any sort of vegetation to relieve the utter desolation of the scene.

2. *Three great rivers flow across these deserts* from interior mountains to the sea ;—the *Indus*, at the eastern extremity ; the *Euphrates*, of which the Persian gulf is a continuation ; and the *Nile of Egypt*, the most remarkable of them all.

The waters of the Nile, descend from the high mountains of Abyssinia, where its thousand branches are fed by copious rains, from November till April. The streams unite in the low country of Sennaar, and form the great river, which then pours its swelling flood through the desert a thousand miles wide, receiving not a single tributary between its parent mountains and the sea. The upper part of its course is through a deep, narrow valley ; but when it has passed over the rocks of Syene, the valley of Egypt begins to expand, and widens gradually to the breadth of ten or twelve miles, until it approaches the sea. Here the river divides, the mountains diverge to the right and left, and the low lands sink, till land, sea and river, are nearly on the same level.

In June, the swelling waters of Abyssinia reach the valley of Egypt, and continue to rise until all the low grounds of the valley are inundated with muddy water. The valley is then a sea bounded by mountains, and diversified by islets crowned with villages, and by promontories of barren sand ! where the waters subside, they leave a deposit of slime on which the husbandman drops his seed. Then, in a few weeks, instead of an expanse of muddy water, the valley of Egypt becomes a smiling scene of exuberant vegetation, which ripens into abundant harvests. But whilst the watered valley presents such diversity and even contrast at different seasons, the deserts that touch this fertility on both sides, present at all seasons and through all ages, one changeless scene of sterility and desolation.

3. *The Egyptian Deserts* cover the whole space of the country not reached by the fertilizing waters of the river. The transition

is immediate from exuberant fertility to everlasting and irclaimable barrenness.

Between the Nile and the Red Sea is a desert about a hundred miles wide, in part mountainous towards upper Egypt, and relieved in a few spots by fountains of fresh water, issuing from the bases of the mountains, and fertilizing a small space of low ground before they are absorbed by the sands, or evaporated in the dry, hot atmosphere of the desert. Wherever such watered spots occur, the date-palm grows, and, with its sweet, nutritious nut, supplies the nomadic tribes with luxurious food.

The Great Western Desert, between the Nile and the Atlantic Ocean, is the most dreary region of the earth, though dotted at wide intervals with Oases, where a low basin or vale is fertilized by springs of water.

Most of the fountains that occur in the deserts are warm and bitter, poisoning all that they touch, and making the sands through which they trickle incurably sterile.

4. Through all these dreary regions, *the mountains* are masses of barren sun-burnt rocks, the *valleys* and *ravines* are composed of drifted sands at the bottom, and naked rocks at the sides. *The plains* are covered with gravel and loose sands, which the breezes roll along in ripples, the whirlwinds gather and lift up in tall sandspouts, and the tempests hurl aloft in clouds that darken the atmosphere, and sometimes bury whole caravans, where they fall in cataracts upon the ground.

5. *The Poisonous Wind*, called *Simoon* or *Samiel*, is often distinguished by its purplish tinge. It comes sometimes silently stealing over the hot desert, blasting vegetation, parching the human skin, and curdling the blood, if inhaled into the lungs. At other times it drives along in a gale from the hottest regions of the desert, and though it is then less charged with the reddish blue poison of the silent wind, it is yet so hot and so loaded with pestiferous exhalations, that man, beast, and vegetable, languish and sicken under its scorching blast.

6. *The Heat of the Deserts* is far beyond anything known in

countries blessed with refreshing rains, shady woods, and green fields. Here are no clouds to intercept the sun's rays ; here is no moisture to absorb and carry off the heat. A surface composed of naked sands and rocks for thousands of miles, receives day by day perpetually the full force of southern sunshine, till the sands are scorching hot, and the rocks almost glow with accumulated heat. During the night, as cloudless as the day, the sands and rocks continue to radiate their gathered heat into free space. This is a partial relief. The breezes on the highlands, sometimes also, feel refreshing to those who have been half-suffocated by the sultry atmosphere of the valleys.

The constant glare of the sunshine by day, and the fine sand which the wind drives through the atmosphere, are hurtful to the eyes and often cause blindness. Excessive heat and drought relax the human system, and weaken the digestive power of the stomach. Strong food and stimulating drinks are injurious; *abstinence from animal food and alcoholic liquors* is easy and natural, and moderate *fasting* is dictated by nature, and salutary.

8. In such circumstances there is a constant *tendency to indolent relaxation, melancholy fancies, and solitary contemplation*. The scenery of the desert is well adapted to aggravate this tendency, and to nourish those principles of the oriental philosophy, which produce a monkish hatred of the body and enthusiastic dreams of heaven.

The desert is the image of death. Over its dreary wastes scarcely a sign of life appears. All is solitude and silence and death, while the winds are still ; but when the stormy winds are roused, they are messengers of wrath, their breath is poisonous, and the clouds which they drive are hot sands. The blessed sunshine that cheers the inhabitants of temperate climates, here quickens nothing into life so much as serpents and scorpions ; it makes no fields green, no meadows bloom, no forest shady with verdure, no birds sing among the branches ;—it is a fire that burns, a glare that blinds, a light that reveals the horrors of eternal desolation.

9. But here, where the earth is stripped of every attraction and converted into an emblem of hell, *the nocturnal heavens are ever bright and glorious*. By day the wretched traveller or dweller in the desert pants with thirst, and would fain seek in some cavern a refuge from the scorching sunshine, the sand-storm, and the dismal aspect of the scene around him. By night he can emerge from his hiding place, when the sad earth is shrouded in gloom, and behold the unclouded heavens, where all is peace and purity ; where the moon and stars exhibit a soft and dewy radiance, and give the imagination a boundless range among worlds of glory and beauty.

The soul is thus led from earth to heaven, from the visible to the invisible ;—and taking as a basis whatever religious ideas it may have imbibed, it constructs a fabric of the imagination, and converting its conceptions into realities, it peoples the deserts with malignant demons, whose moan is heard in the night wind, and whose changeful and horrid shapes are seen in the undefined shadows of the desert. Haunted by its own creations, the soul fights against its spiritual enemies, by prayer and fasting ; and by the exercise of faith, sees visions of heavenly messengers, and scenes of celestial bliss. Animated by these, it labors to free itself from its fleshy prison, and from this dreary world of sin and death ; and endeavors by the exclusion of all earthly thoughts, the suppression of all earthly sympathies and desires, and by perpetual dreamy contemplations of the spiritual world, to fit itself for an immediate entrance into the celestial paradise, whose outskirts are seen in the nocturnal heavens above the desert.

10. Now it is not difficult to conceive how such a country as Egypt, may predispose the soul to a solitary contemplative life, and how the desert into which the imaginative enthusiast retires, may breed in his soul all the feelings and fancies, that so remarkably distinguished the Egyptian hermits.

Nor is it wonderful, that in such times and circumstances, well-meaning, pious souls, should be carried away by one-sided views of religion ; and neglecting the earthly relations and duties of

man, should run the principle of devotion to God into error, by running it into excess. In a region where the earth is divested of its charms, and human life of its principal enjoyments, the soul naturally seeks a refuge in heaven from the dreariness of its mortal state. Society can afford little pleasure where desolation reigns, and all the powers of life are enfeebled by heat and drought. Hence the duties of society are often shunned as burdensome. Celibacy is preferred to marriage, and solitude to society, by those whose religious feelings incline them to take gloomy views of human life. Such views the climate and aspects of Egypt are well adapted to produce.

11. But it is only when certain principles of religious philosophy predominate, that monkery arises in a country like Egypt. The Bedouins of the desert do not resort to celibacy and solitude for relief, though they are great admirers of monkish saints, and always have been. They are lean, shriveled, red-eyed, black, diminutive creatures. Perpetual want makes them fierce and predatory. Necessity drives them from place to place for subsistence. They are prone to religious enthusiasm. Of this Mahomet took advantage—he fired their imaginations with the promise of a paradise filled with all the sensual delights which their passions craved, but their circumstances denied them. For these they fought bravely, because a speedy death would introduce them the sooner to paradise. Had Mahomet persuaded them that a life of monastic seclusion and mortification was a passport to paradise, the Bedouins would have been enthusiastically devoted monks.

12. From Egypt, monachism spread into Palestine. St. Hilarion, founder of the Palestine monasteries, selected as his place of exercise the desert of Gaza, which is but a continuation of the Egyptian deserts. His disciples spread Eastward along the border of the desert that bounds the fertile land of Palestine on the South and East. This desert extends northwardly along the Eastern border of Syria. The multiplying monks followed this border, being deterred from penetrating deeply into the Arabian and

Mesopotamian deserts, by the fear of the Saracens, who claimed possession of every spot on those barren wilds, where water and vegetation afforded subsistence for man. But the monks of Palestine and Syria, and afterwards those farther north, found more eligible solitudes on the mountain tops, where they were protected from disturbance, because the surrounding valleys were occupied chiefly by a Christian population. By the end of the fourth century, scarcely a high mountain in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire between Armenia and Arabia, was without a colony of monks.

12. To illustrate the lives of St. Antony and other Egyptian monks, we shall notice the chief divisions of Egypt and the chief localities of the monasteries.

Egypt has been usually distinguished into Lower, Middle, and Upper Egypt.

Lower Egypt embraces the broad triangle anciently called the Delta, in which the river divides and the low grounds spread out to a breadth of more than a hundred miles along the seacoast. At the north-western angle of this Delta are the seaport and once great city of Alexandria, now reduced to one-tenth of its former population. It stands on a sandy peninsula between the sea and a salt lake, anciently called Mareotis. Near the southern shore of this lake, and on the border of the desert, many monks of the fourth and fifth centuries established themselves. At no great distance farther south, were the Mountain of Nitria and the marshy grounds of Scetis, which were famous seats of monasteries.

Middle Egypt comprehends the broader part of the Valley of the Nile above the Delta. The average width of this part of the valley is some eight or ten miles; but a singular recess of the mountains on the western side, opens a large space of fertile low country, in which Lake Moeris is situated. The lake is connected with the Nile by the great canal of Arsinoe. On the southern side of this lake the Jewish Therapeutes had their monasteries. Christian monks also settled there in the fourth century.

Upper Egypt was usually called Thebaid, from the once great

city of Thebes, whose ruins are yet an object of wonder to travellers. The valley in these upper parts is narrow, the average width not exceeding four miles, or thereabouts; and the bordering mountains are higher and more abrupt than they are below. In Thebaid St. Pachomius founded his order of monks, in the district of Tabenna. The mountains of Upper Egypt as well as of the lower parts of the country, were filled with monks. It was in Middle Egypt, or the Lower Thebaid that St. Antony founded his monasteries, in the mountains bordering the valley.

13. The excessive superstition of the ancient Egyptians is well known. But they bore a bad character in other respects. Aelian says that they would endure the severest tortures without flinching, and that they would rather be racked to death than confess the truth.*

Ammianus Marcellinus says, that the Egyptians were swarthy, lean, and dry in their persons; fiery in all their motions; quarrelsome and bitter in their disputes. A man among them would be ashamed of himself, if he could not show on his back the marks of the whippings that he had gotten for refusing to pay his taxes. No torture could wring from a thief a confession of his name or crime.†

These were the sort of people to make great monks. What would be almost unendurably hard for others to bear, would come easy to them.

* Var Hist. vii. 18.

† Amm. Marcell. xxii. 16.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LIFE OF ST. ANTONY THE MONK.

Translated with some abridgment from the Greek of St. Athanasius.

PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

ST. ANTONY was born in Egypt in the year 251, and died in the year 356, aged 105 years. St Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who wrote this life of Antony, was born about the year 296 and died in the year 373, after having been bishop of Alexandria for the space of 46 years, though he spent a part of the time in exile. Being an Egyptian by birth, having lived so many years cotermporarily with Antony, and been personally acquainted with him and with some of his most intimate disciples, he had good opportunities of learning the facts which he relates of the great founder of monasteries, and of investigating the truth of the wonderful things that he relates of him. Now, as no sober-minded man, in these days, can believe the stories of demons and of miracles which this sainted bishop relates of the sainted founder of monasteries, we must suppose that either St. Antony, or his disciples, or his sainted biographer, fancied or feigned these incredible things to have really happened. It is hard to accuse such glorified saints of wilful imposture, and quite as hard, if not harder, to account for such fables in such a case, without the supposition of both wilful imposture and superstitious credulity.

St. Athanasius wrote in a rather prolix, though simple style, and some parts of his narrative are of no importance. We have therefore somewhat abbreviated his work in the translation. We have also added some notes by way of explanation or comment.

LIFE OF ST. ANTONY.

1. *The Preface addressed to the foreign Monks.*

You gloriously seek to emulate the monks of Egypt in all their virtues: for among you also the institutions and usages of monachism now exist. You have requested that I should write the life of St. Antony, because he first instituted monasteries. You wish to know whether the reports concerning him are true; and you are desirous of imitating his holy zeal. With pleasure do I comply with your request; for it will do me good to remember St. Antony, and your admiration will cause you to emulate his holy example.

You need not scruple to believe what you have heard concerning him. You have probably heard but a small part of what he did; and what I shall write will yet leave a great part of his history untold; nor will the narration equal the dignity of the subject. To ascertain the facts, I have consulted those monks who were longest and most intimately acquainted with him. I have duly investigated the truth of what I relate, and have carefully recorded what I know of myself (for I saw him often), and what I have been told by those who were with him, and especially by one who acted for a considerable time as his servant, and poured water on his hands when he washed.

2. *The youth of St. Antony until he became a Monk.*

Antony was born in Egypt, of noble parents, from whom, as they were Christians, he received a Christian education. He was brought up in the house of his parents, and had no intercourse with other persons. When he approached the age of manhood, he was unwilling to go to school, because he disliked the company of other youth. His whole desire was to live like Jacob (Gen

xxv. 27.)—a simple life at home. But nevertheless, when he went to church with his parents, he was not a negligent hearer or worshipper, even in his boyhood. He was an obedient son and attentive to the lessons read in church, and applied them to his own practical use. He did not, as the sons of rich parents are apt to do, complain if he was not furnished with luxurious fare : he took no pleasure in such things, but was content with whatever was given him.

By the death of his parents, when he was eighteen or twenty years old, he was left in charge of the house and of a very young sister. Within six months afterwards, when he went to church one day as usual, and before the service began, he fell into a meditation on the apostles and primitive Christians,—how the former had left all to follow their Saviour, and the latter had sold their possessions for the benefit of the poor. Full of these thoughts he entered the church, while the lesson from the gospel was being read, and heard how the Lord said to the rich young man, *If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.* Antony felt this to be a divine admonition to himself. Therefore, when he went home, he divided his inheritance, consisting of 300 acres of fertile land, among the people of the village; and having sold his moveables, he gave the proceeds to the poor, reserving only a small portion for his young sister.

When he went to church again, he heard the Lord saying, *Take no thought for the morrow.* Without delay he went and gave this reserved portion to the poor, and committed his sister to the care of some virgins of his acquaintance that she might be nourished in the Virgin-house.* He then left the dwellings of

* The Greek word is *Parthenon*, *Virgin-house*. Tillemont supposed it was a nunnery, and the earliest mentioned in the Church; but Fleury and Helyot with more reason took it to have been merely a virgin-house, that is, a dwelling, or part of a dwelling, in which two or three holy virgins lived together privately with their relations, according to the custom then prevalent in the Church. We venture to suggest that this one was

men, and devoted himself to an ascetic life of prayer and bodily mortification.

3. *He begins an ascetic course of Life.*

As yet no monasteries existed in Egypt or elsewhere ; nor had any monk penetrated the pathless deserts ; but each one who had a mind to devote himself to ascetism, retired to some solitary place near his own village.

Near Antony's village was an old man, who had, from his youth led a solitary life. When Antony found him and saw his manner of life, he began to imitate him beautifully. He presently took up his abode more remote from the villages ; and whenever he heard of an ascetic distinguished for virtue, he sought him out as a bee seeks the flowers ; and never left him until, like a bee, he had gathered something good to carry home. He never returned to his father's dwelling, nor took any interest in the affairs of the neighborhood, but devoted himself exclusively to his spiritual exercises. But he worked with his hands, after he had learned that *if any one will not work, neither should he eat*. He lived on a part of what he made, and gave the rest to the poor. He prayed continually, after he heard *pray without ceasing*. He gave attention to reading, that he might not loose anything of what was written ; and he retained everything so well, that his mind afterwards served him instead of books.

Living after this manner, Antony was beloved by all. He subjected himself sincerely to the instructions of every good man whom he approached, and learned of each that virtue in which each excelled. He contemplated in one his gracious manners, in another his earnestness in prayer, in another his meekness or humanity, or love of reading ; he admired this man's watchfulness, that man's fasting and lying on the ground ; and another's self-denial. In short, he marked how pious all were towards Christ, how affectionate towards one another. Filled with these observations a sort of boarding-school for girls, since Antony's sister was too young to enter as a nun or professed virgin.

tions, he returned to his own place of exercise, and labored to reduce to practice all that he had learned. He had with his fellows no contest but this,—not to appear inferior to them in their several virtues; and this he did, not to grieve but to gladden their hearts. Therefore, all who lived in this vicinity, and whose company he kept, called him the beloved of God, and the elder saluted him as a son, the younger as a brother.*

4. *Antony's first contest with the Devil*

But that hater of good, the envious Devil, could not bear the holy purpose of the young man, and set himself against all his pious endeavors. He first attempted to draw him away from his ascetic life, calling to his remembrance his former possessions, the care of his sister,† the nobility of his family, the love of money, the desire of glory, the pleasures of wealth and of ease; and on the other hand, the hardness of virtue, the laboriousness of his life, the infirmities of his body, and the long struggle before him. In a word, he confounded his understanding with subtle reasonings, that he might draw him from the right way. When he failed thus to shake Antony's purpose, and was baffled by his constancy, his faith and his unceasing prayers, he resorted to the weapons near the navel of a young man's belly—the most dangerous of all. He troubled him by night and vexed him by day, with unclean thoughts, which Antony drove away by prayer. He tickled his flesh, till the young man blushed, and had to fortify his mind by prayer and fasting. He assumed the shape, and *imitated the actions of a woman, by night*, that he might deceive Antony. But the young man thought of Christ and of his high

* From this chapter it is evident that many ascetics had retired into solitary places, before Antony began his course, but this is the earliest mention of the solitary mode of life in the deserts.

† This is one among many instances in the lives of monks, in which the struggling of natural reason and conscience against superstition, is considered as a temptation of the Devil. "The care of his sister," was so obviously a natural duty, that he could not abandon her without some uneasy feeling.

calling, and of the superiority of intellect over sense ; and thus he quenched the live coal of this temptation.

When the enemy again suggested the delights of sensual indulgence, Antony became angry, and called to mind the threat of hell-fire, and of the worm that never dies ; and so he escaped unhurt.

Thus was the Devil disgraced in all these contests. He thought himself a god, yet he was fooled by a youth.

The Dragon, when he found that he could not prevail by assaulting him with internal reasonings and imagined pleasures, gnashed his teeth with rage, and henceforth used the human voice, and thus addressed Antony. I have deceived and conquered many in my time ; but now in your case, as in that of many others, I am defied by your ascetic labors.

And who are you, (said Antony, surprised at this address) who talk to me of such matters ?

I am (said the Devil in a loud complaining tone of voice) the one who tickles the flesh of young men :—I am called the Spirit of Fornication. Ah ! many a one who desired to live chastely have I seduced : many have I hypocritically misled by tickling their flesh. I am he of whom the prophet speaks in these words—*The Spirit of Fornication deceived them.* (Hos. iv. 12.) Often have I disturbed you, and as often been driven away by you.

Then Antony gave thanks to the Lord, and taking courage, he said to the Devil :—Then you are a contemptible black-hearted fellow, and as weak as a boy. For the future I shall despise you. The Lord is my helper.

The black fellow was frightened at these words, and fled ; being now afraid to come near Antony. So ended Antony's first battle with the Devil.

5. *How Antony prepared for a second encounter.*

Because he had routed the demon once, he did not therefore become remiss ; nor did the Devil cease to watch Antony. He walked round him like a roaring lion, watching for an opportunity

to assail him. Antony, on his part, knowing from the Scriptures that the Devil had many ways of tempting men, applied himself vigorously to his exercises, that he might be prepared at all points for his adversary. He subjected his body to a severer discipline ; lest, having conquered in one way, he might be defeated in some other. He determined, therefore, to accustom himself to harder exercises. Many were astonished at the ease with which he bore them. But by long practice he had acquired a confirmed habit of bodily mortification. He would watch whole nights, at which people wondered. Often he ate but once a day, and then, after sunset ; but sometimes he would eat but once in two days, or even four days. His usual food was bread and salt ; his drink, water only. As to flesh and wine, we need not mention them, for they were not found among any of the ascetics. For sleeping, he was content with a mat at most—generally with the bare ground. He would not anoint himself with oil, saying, that young persons better adorned the ascetic life by cheerfully submitting to hardships, than by laboring for things that made the body effeminate. The mind, he said, was strengthened by weakening the pleasures of the body.

6. *How the Devil gave Antony a beating.*

Such being the manner of his life, he retired farther from the village and dwelt among the sepulchres. A servant was at long intervals to fetch him a supply of bread. Having entered one of the sepulchres, he shut the door upon himself and there abode. When his enemy, the Devil, saw this, he feared that the whole desert would soon be filled with ascetics. Therefore he came upon him one night with a whole troop of demons, and beat him so unmercifully, that he lay on the ground like a dead man. On the next day his servant came with bread for him, and found him there, apparently dead. He carried him into the village temple, and laid him upon the floor. Many of his relations and other people came and sat by his body, supposing it to be a corpse. In the night he revived ; and perceiving that all the company

were asleep, except his servant, he beckoned to him, and commanded him not to waken the rest, but to carry him back to the sepulchre. This being done, he shut himself up as before, and remained in the vault.

7. *What a hubbub the Devil raised against Antony in the Sepulchre.*

As he could not stand by reason of the wounds which the demons had inflicted upon him, Antony prayed as he lay on the ground. When he had finished his prayers, he said in a loud voice,—Here, Devils, here am I, Antony, ready for more of your wounds. Try your worst, for you shall never separate me from Christ. He also sang the Psalm, *Though a host should encamp against me, yet my heart shall not fear.*

This was the true spirit of an ascetic, and those were his words. But that black Devil, hater of good, wondering that Antony dared to return after the beating that he had given him, called to his hell-hounds, and bursting with indignation, said to them: Don't you see now? This fellow could not be restrained, either by the spirit of fornication, or by bangs and bruises. Nay, he comes against us only the more audaciously. We must assail him in another way. So spake the Devil.

It was no hard matter for him to devise other and still other schemes of malice. So that night they raised such a hubbub, that the whole place was shaken; the four walls of the sepulchre were broken, and the demons rushed in through the breaches, in all manner of fearful shapes. The whole room and the space around were filled with spectral lions, bears, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, wolves. Every one acted according to his character. The lion roared and sprang; the bull, bellowing, rushed with presented horns; the serpent crawled; the wolf howled and growled. In short all seemed to be in a threatening rage.

Antony, though he suffered yet grievously from the whips and clubs of the demons, now watched them with a calm mind, though he had to groan from the pains of his body. Feeling excited by

this scene, he said in a mocking way : If you could do any harm, you would be satisfied to come one at a time ; but being weakened by the Lord, you try to frighten me after a fashion by your numbers. It is also an evident token of your impotence that you put on the shapes of brute animals. Then after a pause, he said confidently : Come on now ; do your worst ! What is the use of all this vain uproar ? If ye have power to hurt, why don't you ? But you can't ; for the Lord is my shield, and my wall of safety

Then the demons attempted many things. They gnashed their teeth at him, being enraged to find how they deluded themselves, and only made sport for him. Now the Lord who watched over the contest, came to Antony's assistance. The saint raised his eyes, and saw through the open roof a ray of light descending upon him. Then the demons vanished, the pains of his body were mitigated, and the building became whole and sound.

When Antony perceived these tokens of God's help, he asked, Where wast thou ? why didst thou not appear for my relief at first ? Then a voice came to him, saying : I was here, Antony ; but I wanted to witness your combat. Now you have finished it, without having flinched. Henceforth I will be your helper, and will make your name celebrated far and wide.*—When he heard this, he rose and prayed, and was soon sensible that he had gained strength by this contest.

8. *Antony's hermit-life in a ruined castle.*

He was now in the 35th year of his age. The day after the hubbub, he went to the old man before-mentioned (in Chap. III), and proposed they should go out into the desert and live together as hermits. The old man, either because he was too old, or because the scheme was a new one, refused. He determined then

* The love of fame, says Young, is the universal passion. Even the solitary ascetic felt it in his most secret feats of starvation, prayer, and demon-fighting. He was conscious of the fact, all the while, that his spiritual heroism would give him renown, and draw around him admiring crowds of spectators.

to go alone, and set off straightway for the mountain.* There again, the enemy, seeing his ardent zeal, endeavored to draw him back from his course. He threw the appearance of a large silver disk or coin in the way before him. Antony, when he saw this trickery of the unclean spirit, stopped, looked at it, and discerning the Devil in the disk, he said to it contemptuously:—Ho, you disk, how came you here in the desert, where there is no beaten way, nor a trace of any traveller having passed? If any had dropped you, you must have been missed; or if you had been lost, you could easily have been found again in this naked solitude. So this must be a trick. But, Mr. Devil, you shall not hinder my purpose by this contrivance. You and your money go to perdition together. Thus spoke Antony; and the words were no sooner out of his mouth, than away went the silver disk in fumes, like smoke from a fire.

Passing on, he saw—not a phantom—but real substantial gold, cast in the way before him. Whether this was done by the same enemy, or by some heavenly being, who would exercise the saint's piety, and show the devil that Antony cared not a straw even for genuine money—neither did Antony tell us, nor can we determine anything about it, except that the gold was real gold. Antony wondered at the great quantity of it; he would not touch it, however, but leaped over it as if it were fire, and ran hastily on without a moment's pause, that he might not know the place again, nor be tempted to return for the gold. Thus, with a confirmed purpose he reached the mountain. Here on the eastern side of the river he found the deserted ruins of an old castle, which, by length of time, had become a den of serpents. He took possession of it as an abode for himself, and no sooner had he done so, than the serpents took fright and scampered away forthwith. He blocked up the entrance, after having laid in

* That is the desert mountain bordering the valley of the Nile, probably in sight of his residence. His native town was Coma, near Heraclea Minor in upper Egypt, or Thebaid, where the valley is narrow.—**SOZOMEN.** Eccl. History. Book i., chap. 13.

a store of bread for six months, (as the Thebans of Egypt often do ; for bread will keep there a whole year*) ; and having a spring of water inside, here ensconcing himself as in a sanctuary, he dwelt alone ; making a monastery of the old castle, and neither going out himself, nor giving admittance to those who visited the place. Thus he lived a long time, secluded as an ascetic, only receiving once in six months a new supply of bread, let down to him from above. But those of his acquaintance who came to the place staid often whole days and nights outside. Then they would hear from within the noise of a multitude in a tumult, shouting and crying with a voice of distress. Get away, Antony, from our possessions. What business have you in the desert ? At first those who stood outside supposed it must be men quarreling with him, who had gotten in by means of ladders. But afterwards, by looking through a crevice, they saw that there was no man with him : then they supposed that demons had made the noise. Then they became terrified, and called to Antony, but he heard them no more than he heeded the demons. Alarmed at receiving no answer they often broke in, and then they heard Antony sing psalms, such as, *Let the Lord arise and his enemies shall be scattered*, &c.†

9. *Antony comes forth a miracle-worker.*

Thus did Antony privately exercise himself during almost twenty years,‡ without leaving his old castle, or being easily seen

* Because in Upper Egypt the climate is exceedingly dry, no rain ever falling there. But this bread, so long kept in such a climate, must have become exceedingly dry and hard. So much the better for a monk, as Anthony would say ; for then the eating of it would be unpleasant.

† On reading this story one is tempted to reflect, that *if* these reported noises in Antony's monastery were really heard by those outside, they must have been made, either by those spiritual beings called demons, who have no corporeal organs of speech or sound of any sort, or by *saint* Antony himself. Here is a hypothetical dilemma, which the reader may solve for himself.

‡ Twenty years' seclusion made a miracle-working saint among the Hindoos.

by any one. Many in the meantime desired ardently to imitate his ascetic mode of life, insomuch that some of his friends determined finally to break open his door, that they might get access to him. Then at last Antony yielded to their eager desire, and came forth from his sanctuary, like one issuing from a heathen temple, after having been initiated into the mysteries of the Gods. His soul was full of a divine inspiration ; but as to his body, those who saw him for the first time wondered to see it as strong as ever, neither fat nor yet emaciated by his long fasting. He bore no mark of his long warfare with demons ; for his appearance was unchanged, his mind was as vigorous, and his manners were as pure, as when he first became an anchorite in his castle.

By him, then, the Lord healed many of their diseases ; others he delivered from evil spirits ; and bestowing upon Antony the grace of speech, he comforted many who were in distress, and reconciled many who had been at variance. By his conversation he induced many to be mindful of their future welfare. He persuaded many to embrace a solitary life. Hence arose those monasteries in the mountains, and those seats and abodes of monks in the desert, who gave up their worldly goods that they might be enrolled among the citizens of heaven.

In one of his journeys to visit the brethren of middle Egypt, he had to cross the canal of Arsinoe, which was full of crocodiles.*

* The ancient geographer Strabo (Book 17, ch. 9.) explains why this canal, which let the waters of the Nile into Lake Mæris, was full of crocodiles. The people of Arsinoe, by this canal, had a great veneration for crocodiles, esteeming them sacred. They had tame ones in the canal, and the priests fed them with bread, meat, and wine, while they lived, and embalmed them after they were dead. Strabo once saw the priests feeding these divine pets, which were basking themselves upon the margin of the canal. Whilst some of the priests held open their monstrous jaws, others would put the dainty meats and drinks upon their tongues. No wonder that the canal of Arsinoe was full of crocodiles. Saint Antony, too, was not so lean as to be a despicable morsel for them. By this time also, it is probable that the veneration for them had nearly ceased, and as they were less fed by devout priests they would not scruple to devour a monk.

All he had to do was to pray, then he and all his companions passed over safely.

Afterwards he returned to his monastery, and strenuously applied himself again to his ascetic labors. Thus, by word and by example, he increased the zeal of his disciples for the monastic life, and incited others to the love of ascetism, so that by his influence a large number of monasteries were founded, over which he presided as abbot, or spiritual father.

One day, when he came forth, he was applied to by all the monks to give them a sermon. He consented, and spoke to them in the Egyptian tongue, after this manner.

10. *St. Antony's Sermon to the Monks. Part I. Exhortation to the Monastic Life.*

The Scriptures are sufficient for your instruction ;* yet it is a good thing for us to exhort one another to fidelity, and to exercise ourselves in teaching. Wherefore do you, as children, tell your father what you know, and I as the elder will impart to you what I know, and what I have experienced.

Now in the first place, let all of you aim at the same thing, and never flag in the pursuit, nor relax your labors, nor say, We have continued long in the exercise ;† but, rather, beginning anew, every day let us increase our diligence : For the whole of man's life is exceedingly short, compared with the ages to come ; so that all our time on earth is nothing to eternal life. Everything in this world is sold at its value, and exchanges are made of value for value received. But the promise of eternal life is bought for a small price : for it is written, *The days of our life are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow.* If then we should continue the whole eighty years in our exercise, we shall afterwards reign for ages of ages. Our labor is upon the earth, but

* An unapostolical sentiment. The necessity of oral traditions, and the supremacy of the Pope of Rome, were as yet undiscovered.

† ῥῆ ἀσκησέι—the ascetic practice, fasting, watching, prayer, &c.

our promised inheritance is in the heavens. We lay down our mortal bodies, and again receive them immortal.

Therefore, my sons, let us not grow weary, nor think the time long, nor that we are doing a great thing: For the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Nor, when we look at this world, let us think it so very large; for the whole earth is small, compared with the whole heavens. Therefore, if we were lords of the whole earth, we should bid it all farewell, as unworthy to be compared with the kingdom of heaven: just as one would despise a brass penny, when he might gain a hundred golden guineas. If you give up a piece of land, it is almost nothing; or if you give up a house or a large sum of gold, you should neither boast nor be down-hearted. On the contrary, we ought to reckon that as nothing, which we give up for virtue. When we die, we often leave our possessions to others whom we would not, as Ecclesiastes says. Why then should we not leave them for virtue's sake, that we may inherit a kingdom?

For the same reason, let us not covet these things; for what profit is there in acquiring what we cannot carry with us to the other world? Let us rather gain durable possessions, such as prudence, righteousness, temperance, courage, understanding, charity, love of the poor, faith in Christ, forbearance, hospitality. If we gain these, we shall find hospitable entertainment among the meek of the earth. Let no one of us therefore think meanly of himself, especially when he considers himself as the Lord's servant, and as bound to devote himself to his master's service.

Now the servant cannot presume to say, Since I labored yesterday, I will not labor to-day; nor counting on the labors of his past days, will he cease for the days to come; but every day, as the Gospel says, he will show the same diligence to please the Lord. So let us continue daily in our exercise, knowing that if we lose a day, we shall not be forgiven on account of the past time; but the Lord will be angry with us for our negligence. So we have heard in Ezekiel (xxxiii. 12); and Judas in one night lost

the labor of the time past. Let us therefore, my children, cleave to the exercise, and not flag; for in this we have also the Lord as a fellow-worker, as it is written, *To every one that chooseth what is good, God is also a co-worker for good*; * and that we may not be negligent, it is well to meditate on the Apostle's saying (1 Cor. xv. 31,) *I die daily*; for if we live every day as if we were dying, we shall not sin. The saying means this; when we rise in the morning, let us consider that we may not live until the evening; and when we lie down at night, we should consider that we may not rise in the morning. Our life is naturally uncertain, and is dealt out to us day by day; being duly affected by this, and living day by day with this upon our minds, we shall not sin, nor desire any earthly thing, nor be angry with any one; but as daily expecting to die, we shall possess nothing, forgive everything to all, have no desire for women, nor any sordid pleasure, but turn away from them as transient things, ever anxiously striving, and looking for the day of judgment: for the prevailing fear of future torments always dissipates the advantage of pleasure, and strengthens the soul against temptation.

Therefore, having entered upon the way of virtue, let us strive the more to reach the things before us, and let no one turn back to the things behind, like Lot's wife (Phil. iii. 14; Luke ix. 62); especially as the Lord hath said that no one, who, *having put his hand to the plough, turneth back, is fit for the kingdom of God*. To turn back is nothing else than for one to mind worldly things again, after he hath repented. Fear not when ye hear of virtue, nor think that the name signifies some strange thing. The thing is not far off, nor without us; it is within us; and the work is easy, if we be only willing. The Greeks travel over land and sea after knowledge: but we have no need to go abroad for the kingdom of heaven, nor to cross the sea after virtue; for the Lord hath said, *The kingdom of heaven is within you*. (Luke xvii. 21.) Virtue needeth only the consent of the will; since it is within us and originateth in the mind; for it is a part of the mind, which is

* There is no such text in the Bible.

naturally intelligent: the soul is therefore in its natural state, when it remaineth as it was originally created; for it was made beautiful and upright. Now that the Lord may acknowledge his work, let us keep the soul for him in its original state of virtue. If the soul vary from this, and turn from its original nature, this is called vice. The thing is therefore not difficult; for if we remain as we were originally made, then we are in a state of virtue. But if we entertain evil thoughts, then we are judged to be vicious. Now, if the thing had to be obtained from without, there would be real difficulty; but since it is within us, let us guard the soul as a precious deposit, which the Lord hath committed to our keeping, in order that he may acknowledge his work to be as he made it. Be it our task to prevent anger from tyrannizing, and lust from ruling over us.*

11. *St. Antony's Sermon continued. Part 2. Demonology, or the doctrine of demons.*

Living after this manner, let us watch, and as it is written, keep our hearts with all diligence; for we have keen and crafty enemies, the evil demons; and besides, as the Apostle saith, *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual things of wickedness in the heavenly places.* (Ephes. vi. 12.) There is therefore a great multitude of them in the air about us; but they differ much among themselves. But to ex-

* The foregoing somewhat metaphysical argument about virtue and the soul, savors more of the polemic bishop of Alexandria, than of the illiterate monk of the desert, into whose mouth he puts it. The doctrine is such as Pelagius afterwards taught,—attributing the sanctification of the soul to itself without the aid of Divine grace, and denying original sin and depravity in the soul. This was the general doctrine of the earlier monks; and was prevalent in the Church during the second and third centuries, and indeed until Saint Augustine hewed it down in his controversy with Pelagius. Its origin was not the Bible, nor even apostolical tradition; but the Platonism of the fathers from the time of Justin Martyr. Plato taught the entire moral ability of man to purify his soul from sin.

plain their nature and their differences, would require a long discourse, and greater ability than we possess. All that we need to know at present, is the arts which they use against us.

First then, we know that the demons were not created evil beings (for God made nothing evil), but were originally good, and fell from their heavenly wisdom, and were cast down to the earth.* They deceived the Gentiles by false appearances; but envying us Christians, they put everything in motion to obstruct our way to heaven, that we may not reach the place from which they were expelled. Hence the need of much prayer and exercise, that one may by the divine gift of discerning spirits, be able to know which among them are more, and which less, evil than others; what each of them specially studies to perform; and how each may be defeated and cast out; for, many are their evil devices and mischievous plots. Therefore the blessed apostle and his associates said, *We are not ignorant of his devices.* (2 Cor. ii. 11). But when we are tempted by them, ought to assist one another. Therefore I, having had some experience of them, speak to you as children.

Now, when they see Christians, but especially monks, making progress by diligent labor, they first assault and tempt them by putting obstacles in their way. These obstacles are evil thoughts, which they suggest. But we should not fear their threats. They are baffled immediately by prayer and fasting, and faith in the Lord; but when baffled, they do not give up their attempts, but come on again with their tricks and devices; for when they cannot deceive the heart by what is manifestly impure pleasure, they change their mode of action. They endeavor to delude or to frighten us by visionary appearances. They put on the shapes of women, of beasts, of serpents, of huge monsters, and of an army of soldiers. But neither should we fear these fantastic re-

* St. Peter says that God *cast them down to hell, and confined them in chains of darkness, until the judgment of the great day*; which is inconsistent with this whole doctrine concerning demons, and all these stories about their tricks. See 2 Peter ii. 4.

presentations ; for they are nothing, and soon disappear, especially when one fortifies himself by faith and the sign of the cross. But they are an audacious and impudent set ; for though they be thus defeated, they will try to impose on you in another way. They pretend to foretell future events ; and they swell themselves up to a prodigious bulk, making themselves as tall as a house, and of enormous breadth ; that they may by such phantasms, carry off those unawares, whom they could not delude by reasonings. But if they find the soul secured by faith against this trick, they finally bring their prince with them.

Antony said also, that they often appeared such as the Lord described the Devil to Job (lxi. 18—21). *His eyes are as the appearance of the morning star, out of his mouth proceed burning lamps, and they are scattered as coals of fire, &c.**

Such being the appearance of the prince of demons, he terrifieth people—as I said before—the crafty braggart : as again the Lord sheweth what he is, saying to Job, “ *He esteemeth iron as stubble, and brass as rotten wood ; he regardeth the sea as a pot of ointment, and the depth of hell as a prisoner ; he counteth the deep as a playground.* (Job. xli. Septuagint). And by Moses (Exod. xv. 9.) *The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake :* and by Isaiah (x. 14.) *I will take away the whole earth, as a nest, and as forsaken eggs.†* Such are their boastings and pretences, that they may impose on the pious. But we who are faithful, should neither fear the Devil’s empty phantasms, nor heed his words : for he is out

* Some of the Fathers thought this description of Leviathan in Job must mean the Devil, because there was so much fire in it : but some thought that Leviathan was the *Devil’s father*, as Jerome tells us in his commentary on Isaiah, ch. xiii. Athanasius quotes the text in Job from the Greek Septuagint.

† Here we have some fair specimens of the manner in which most of the Fathers interpreted and applied the Holy Scriptures. Any one who will read the passages from which these quotations are taken, may see that they have no more relation to “the prince of demons,” than to the man in the moon. Yet the Romanists would have us rely implicitly upon these miserable interpreters !

and out a liar ; and his visible shapes are as false as his words for that is not true light which appears in them, but rather an image of the fire prepared for their punishment. The demons show themselves in the flames in which they are to burn, and try to frighten men with them ; and when they vanish, they carry with them this image of the fire that is to burn them, hurting none of the faithful.

They are great cheats, and ready to turn themselves into every sort of shape, and put on every sort of character. They often pretend, without showing themselves, to sing psalms ; and they tell us where passages of Scripture are to be found. Sometimes when we are reading, they repeat after us what we read, like an echo. Sometimes also, when we are asleep, they waken us up to our prayers, and that so often as to let us get hardly any sleep. Sometimes, too, they appear in the habit of monks, and talk very religiously, in order to gain our confidence, and then to seduce us.

But we must not give heed to them, even when they waken us up to prayer, or admonish us to abstain from eating, or pretend to accuse us of negligence, and charge us to lie on the ground ; though they are sometimes very indulgent to us in respect to these things. It is not from piety that they do these things, but to drive the simple to desperation, and make them think the exercise a useless thing, and the life of a monk disgusting and oppressive. Our Lord would not suffer the demons to speak, even when they confessed the truth, lest they should defile the truth with their own uncleanness : so should we turn away our ears from them, even when they speak the truth : for it is unbecoming, when we have the Holy Scriptures, to receive instruction from the Devil.—For the demons do everything to deceive the simple ; they put on false appearances ; they make disturbance and noise, sometimes break out in loud laughter, and sometimes whisper in your ears. If you do not mind these things, then they will weep and lament, as if they were beaten. But let us not listen to them, nor obey them ; but be the more strenuous in the

exercise, and not suffer them to turn us aside from our path, whatever artifices they may use. Nor let us fear them, even when they make a show of attacking us, or threaten us with death ; for they are weak and can do nothing but threaten.*

Thus far I have given you only a sketch of the subject ; but now it will not be unprofitable to take a wider and deeper view of the nature and history of demons ; the knowledge of which will be very useful to you.

When the Lord sojourned upon earth, the enemy fell and his powers were weakened. Yet the fallen tyrant, though powerless, will not rest ; though all he can do is to threaten. Think of this, and you can despise the demons. If they had bodies like ours, men might hide from them, and thus escape injury ; as we hide from one another by closing our doors. But such is not their nature. They can enter when the doors are shut ; and they are everywhere in the atmosphere around us. Their prince is the Devil, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of wickedness, as our Saviour called him. So are they all malicious, and ready to do mischief. No place is free from their snares. If they spare us, it is not out of good will ; for the more virtuous and devout we are, the more do they try to harm us. The reason why they do us no mischief is that they cannot : they can only threaten. If they had the power, they would tear us up in a moment : they would not leave a Christian of us alive ; for in our assemblies we are always speaking ill of them ; and they know that their power fails as our spiritual strength increases. Piety is an abomination to the sinner. Having no power against us, they wound one another, when they find that they cannot hurt those whom they threaten. Think of this and fear them not. If they had any real power over us, they would not come in crowds

* Yet they gave Antony a substantial beating in the sepulchre. We know of but one way in which his doctrine here can be reconciled with his experience there, and that is, to suppose that the clubs and whips in the sepulchre were wielded by demons of flesh and blood, such as are apt to be found in villages.

upon us, nor assume visionary shapes to deceive us; but, one of them alone would be sufficient to work his will; and especially because every one had effective power, he would not resort to a vain show—an airy nothing—nor fetch a crowd with him, to frighten us; but he would directly employ his power in fulfilling his purpose. But because they can do no harm, the demons play like actors on the stage, changing their forms and scaring the boys with the visionary appearance of a multitude of frightful shapes. Wherefore they are only the more contemptible. The angel of the Lord who destroyed the Assyrian host (2 Kings xix. 35), had no need of such vanities. But some one may say, Did not the Devil show power against Job, when he destroyed his flocks and herds, killed his children by tearing down the house over their heads, and then afflicted his person with a sore disease? Yes; but this was not Satan's own power; it was the power which God granted him for a time, in order to try Job's patience. Without this Divine permission, the contemptible enemy could have done nothing against Job. We read in the Evangelist (Mat. viii. 31) how the demons said to the Lord, *Permit us to go into the herd of swine*. So they have of themselves no power even over swine, much less over those who are made after the image of God. Therefore we ought to fear God only, and to despise the demons. Still, however, the more they attempt against us, the more zealously should we devote ourselves to the exercise: for an upright life and faith towards God are a strong defence against them. They are afraid of the ascetic's fasting, watching, prayers, meekness, quietness, contempt of money and of vainglory,—of his humility, love of the poor, alms, freedom from anger, and above all, piety towards Christ. They endeavor by all means to prevent men from obtaining the power to tread them under their feet, according to the Saviour's promise to his disciples (Luke x. 19.)

Therefore, when they pretend to foretell future events, let no one give heed to them. They often tell us, days beforehand, of brethren coming to visit us, and the brethren come accordingly.

They do this, not out of regard for those who hear them, but to persuade men to put confidence in them, that they may afterwards lead them to destruction. Instead of trusting them, we ought to drive them away, because we have no need of their predictions. They have in reality no foreknowledge. What wonder is it, if by means of their lighter bodies,* they are able, when they see men set off on a journey, to outrun them, and foretell their coming? A swift horseman might do the same thing, by out-travelling a man on foot. Only the omniscient God has proper foreknowledge of events. These roguish imposters, when they see and hear things among us, steal off to another place and tell it, before people can hear it by other means. Suppose one were to leave Thebes or some other place, to travel to another distant place on foot. Before he departs, they know nothing about it; but when they see him going, they run ahead and announce his coming. But sometimes their news is false, because the traveller turns back. So they babble sometimes about the overflowings of the river (Nile.) Having seen much rain fall in Ethiopia, and knowing that this causes the rising of the water, they run down to Egypt, and announce that the flood is coming.† Such were the Greek oracles, by which, through the agency of demons, men were in like manner led into error by pretended prophecies. But these deceptive oracles have ceased, since Christ came into the world and abolished the deceitful arts of demons. These often make plausible conjectures of coming events, without having absolute foreknowledge; as physicians learn by experience to make probable conjectures of the issue of diseases, and navigators and husbandmen, of the changes of the weather.

* It was the common opinion of the early Fathers, derived originally from the heathen, that spiritual beings and the human soul after death, were invested with material bodies, so refined as to be generally invisible. Still they might be made visible. Hence visible demons and ghosts of men.

† As the fertility of Egypt depends on the overflowings of the Nile, the people look for them in their season with great anxiety, as a failure would be fatal to their crops.

As for the predictions of the demons, we have no need of them. What does it profit us to hear of such things a few days before they happen? Such knowledge contributes nothing to virtue. None of us will be condemned for ignorance of these matters, nor rewarded for knowing them; but each one will be judged according to his faith, and his obedience to the Divine commands, Wherefore we should disregard these things, and apply ourselves to our exercise and our spiritual labors; not to gain foreknowledge, but the Divine approbation. We should pray, not for the knowledge of future events, as a reward for our labors, but for the help of the Lord, that we may gain the victory in our conflict with the Devil. If, however, we be solicitous to know future events, let us purify our minds; for I am fully persuaded, that a mind thoroughly purified, and calmly steadfast in its nature, is endued with a much clearer vision, by Divine revelation, than any of the demons possess. Such was the mind of Elisha, when he saw his servant Gehazi, and the host of angels standing by him (2 Kings v. 26 and vi. 17.) When, therefore, they come by night, to announce future things, or say, We are angels; believe them not, for they lie. Even if they praise the ascetic life, and pronounce you blessed; do not listen to them, nor accept their commendations; but rather fortify yourselves and the house by the sign of the cross, and betake yourselves to prayer: then you will see them vanish away; for they are timid, and are dreadfully afraid when they see the sign of the Lord's cross, since the Saviour spoiled them upon it, and publicly triumphed over them (Col. ii. 15.)

12. *The Sermon concluded. More about the Demons.*

Hear now in what manner we may easily distinguish the presence of the evil angels from that of the good. When good angels appear, there is no disturbance—no contention, no clamor,—but something so calm and gentle, that it fills the soul with gladness; for the Lord is with them. The thoughts of the soul are then subject to no agitation, but the soul is illuminated, so as to behold

those who appear, and is so filled with heavenly desires, that it would fain fly away with them, when they depart. If at first sight men are afraid, when angels appear, these soon change that fear into love ; as Gabriel did to Zacharias, (Luke i. 11,) and the angel at the Lord's sepulchre to the women. (Mat. xxviii. 5.) Such is the appearance of good angels.

But the rush and vision of evil demons is full of confusion with clamor, noise and shouting, like the noise made by a parcel of riotous young men, or a party of robbers in the desert. Hence our minds are affected with timidity, and our thoughts become disturbed and confused, our countenances downcast and sad, our ascetism hateful ; we remember with sorrow the homes and friends that we left, and the fear of death invades our souls ; finally, the desire of evil things, and the contempt of virtue, corrupt our hearts. Therefore when a vision appears, and you are at first terrified, but soon filled with unspeakable joy, and you feel delightfully tranquillized and refreshed, your soul enjoying peace, confidence, and love towards God ;—then take courage and go to prayer : for the joy and self-possession of the soul manifests the presence of holy beings. So Abraham rejoiced when he saw the Lord (John viii. 56), and John Baptist leaped for joy at the salutation of Mary the mother of God.* (Luke i. 41.) But if, when superior beings appear, there be tumult and hubbub from without, a visionary show of worldly grandeur, and threatenings of death, as before described,—then know that this is an onset of evil spirits. Moreover, this is a further sign, when your fear of the apparition is permanent, then they are enemies who appear : for the demons do not take away your fear ; on the contrary, when they see you afraid, they augment their visionary exhibitions, to make them more terrible, and then they come up to you, mocking, and

* Θεοτοκος. This impious title began to be given to Mary the mother of Jesus (as the Evangelists call her,) in this age, during the Arian controversy. Yet it is not more impious than some expressions occasionally heard among Protestants, as that "God the mighty Maker *died*," in Watts's Hymns.

say, Fall down and worship. It was in this way they deluded the Gentiles to idolatry, making them believe these demons were Gods. But the Lord has not suffered them to deceive us. When the Devil tried him with such arts, the Lord said, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* (Luke iv. 8.) Wherefore the old rogue ought to be more and more despised by us; for the Lord said that he had done this on our account; so that when the demons hear us utter such words, they may be driven away; the Lord having rebuked them in these words.*

But we must not be vain when we cast out demons, nor puff ourselves up when we heal the sick: for he who casts out demons is not alone worthy of admiration; nor should he who is unable to do it be therefore despised. But whenever one excels in the exercise of virtue, him we ought to imitate, and endeavor even to excel; for to work miracles is not of ourselves. The power is the Lord's. Thus he said to his disciples, *Rejoice not that the demons are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* (Luke x. 20.) To have our names written in heaven, is a testimony of our virtue; but to cast out demons, is the Saviour's gift. But as I said before, we should pray for the gift of discerning spirits,—that, as it is written, we may not believe every spirit. (1 John iv. 1.)

I would rather not say anything of myself. But that you may not think I say these things simply, and without experience of their truth, but may be persuaded of them, though I *become as a fool* (2 Cor. xii. 11.)—but the Lord knoweth that it is not out of regard for myself, but out of love to you, and for your instruction that I speak of what I have seen concerning the devices of demons. As often as they blessed me, I cursed them in the name of the Lord. As often as they foretold the rising of the river, I said to them, What business is that of yours? Some-

*Let the reader compare this Christian account of good and evil apparitions with the fancies of the New Platonists on the same subject, as described in our 9th chapter, § 3, and he will easily see the heathenish origin of these notions among the Fathers and Monks.

times they would come threatening me, and would surround me in the form of an army of horsemen, fully equipped. Sometimes they would fill the house with wild beasts and serpents, then I sang the psalm, *Some in chariots, some on horses ; but we will magnify the name of the Lord our God*—(Ps. xx. 7.)—so our prayers overthrew them. Sometimes they came in the dark, having the appearance of light, and said, Antony, we have come to give you light ; but I shut my eyes and prayed. The light of the wicked was put out in a moment. A few months afterwards they came singing psalms, as it were, and speaking from the Scriptures. But I, as if deaf, heard them not. Once they shook the monastery like an earthquake, but I prayed that my mind might remain unmoved. Afterwards they came again, clapping, whistling, and dancing. But when I fell down, and began to pray and sing psalms to myself, straightway they began to whimper and cry, as if they had been unnerved. But I glorified God for thus openly quelling their audacity and madness. Once a monstrously tall demon came with a show, and had the audacity to say, I am the power and the providence of God. What shall I do for you ? Then I spit at him, and calling upon the name of Christ, tried to strike him, and thought that I did strike him, and straightway this huge fellow, with all his demons, vanished at the name of Christ. Once, too, when I was fasting, he came in the shape of a monk—the hypocritical knave—carrying the appearance of loaves, and he counseled me, saying, Eat, and cease from your many labors. You too are a man, and your strength will fail. But I, perceiving his craftiness, rose up to pray. He could not stand that, for he walked off, and passed through the door in the form of smoke. Many a time in the desert he displayed the appearance of gold, that I might touch it, and look at it. But I sang psalms at the gold-fiend, and it melted away. Oftentimes they lashed me with whips, but when I said, Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ, then they turned and lashed one another.* But it was not I who defeated them so, it was the

* We have a difficulty about this devil's bread, and gold, and whipping.

Lord, who said, *I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven.* (Luke x. 18.) But I, my children, remembering the Apostle's word, *have in a figure transferred it to myself*, that you may learn, not to flag in the exercise, nor to fear the appearances of the Devil and his imps. And since I have become a fool in telling these things, take another instance as a proof that you may be safe and fearless. Believe me, for I tell no lie. Once on a time some one knocked at the door of my monastery. When I went out, I saw a tall, huge phantom. When I asked, Who are you? he answered, I am Satan. When I asked, What is your business here? he said, Why do all the monks and Christians of every sort slander me so? Why are they cursing me every hour? I answered, Because you trouble them. But, said he, it is not I that trouble them; they only plague themselves about me; for I have become weak. Have they not read, *The weapons of the enemy have failed forever, and thou hast destroyed their cities?*—(Ps. ix. 6.) Now I have no weapon, no city. Christians are found everywhere, and even the desert is full of monks. Let them keep watch over themselves, and not curse me for nothing.*—So spake the devil. Then I, admiring the grace of the Lord, said to him, You are always a liar, and never tell the truth; nevertheless, you have this time unwillingly said a true thing; for Christ has weakened and cast you down. When

If they were the real, substantial things, then the Devil is not so powerless as Father Antony would make out. If they were mere phantoms or optical illusions, they could not be eaten, touched, or felt: and what an old fool must the Devil be to try men with such unsubstantial things. If the men rejected them, and sung or prayed them away, the Devil was defeated, but if they offered to take them, and found that they were nothing, then surely the Devil would lose all credit with them, and be worse defeated than in the other case. To ascribe such silly tricks to Satan, is to make him as great a fool as that young devil was that the witty blackguard Rabelais represented as having been cheated by a clown.

* Here the author unconsciously satirizes his own "doctrine of demons" and silly fancies about the pranks which they play upon ascetic devotees. He puts into the Devil's mouth by far the most rational language in the whole sermon.

he heard the name of Christ, he was scorched by it and vanished. Now, since the Devil himself confesses that he can do nothing, we ought wholly to despise both him and his imps. Such as I have stated are the various devices of the enemy and his dogs. But let us keep in mind, that when the Lord is with us these enemies can do nothing against us. For when they come, such as they find us, such are they towards us, and *they accommodate their appearances to the state of our minds*.^{*} When they find us fearful and troubled, straightway like robbers they assault the place which they find unguarded; and whatsoever gloomy thoughts we have of ourselves, these they put into a visible shape with additions. Now, if they see us fearful and timid, they increase the fear by apparitions and threats, and so the unhappy soul is punished. But if they find us rejoicing in the Lord, and meditating or conversing on divine things, then demons have no power over the Christian, nor indeed over any one thus engaged: for when they see the soul secured by such thoughts, they turn away deeply ashamed of themselves. Therefore, if we would despise the enemy, let us always think of divine things and rejoice in hope, then we shall always see the pranks of demons dissolve like smoke, and the demons themselves flying rather than pursuing: for, as I said before, they are very timid, always expecting the fire prepared for them. Particularly this token of security you may always have against them. When an apparition presents itself, do not fall into a fright, but, whatever it be, boldly ask, Who art thou? and whence? Then if it be a holy vision it will show itself clearly,

* Here the author suggests a principle, without being aware of it, by which we may solve the phenomena of these visions of demons, so far as they were believed to be real by those who professed to have seen them. The brooding imagination of a solitary hypochondriac would become so excited, one while with gloomy, another while with rapturous conceptions, that his mind would project these images into space, and make them appear as objects of sense. The philosophy of these apparitions has begun of late years to be well understood, so that we can account for many things of the sort related in ancient books, without supposing them all to have been falsely reported.

and your fear will be changed into joy. But if it be the Devil, it will fade and vanish away, seeing the soul fortified; for, asking a question is a sign of self-possession. So Joshua, the son of Nun, learned the character of the vision by a question (Josh. v. 13): but the enemy could not conceal himself when Daniel asked him a question.*

END OF THE SERMON.

13. *Antony's conduct in the Persecution—his Miracles—and the crowds that resorted to his Monastery.*

All listened with delight to this discourse of Antony. The effect of it was, that in some the love of virtue increased, in others negligence was cast away, in others vanity was brought to an end, and all learned to despise the schemes of the Devil, while they admired Antony's gift of discerning spirits. Then were the monasteries in the mountains like tabernacles filled with the choirs of heaven, singing psalms, discoursing, fasting, praying, rejoicing in the hope of future things, laboring that they might give alms, having love and sympathy for one another; and truly the place looked like one set apart for religion and righteousness, for no one there either did or suffered wrong, and the tax-gatherer's voice was unheard. The whole multitude were ascetics, all engaged in the same pursuit of virtue; so that one beholding the monasteries and the order of the monks might exclaim, *How beautiful are thy dwellings, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel!* (Num. xiv. 5.)

But Antony, retiring again to his monastery, there shut himself up, and from day to day increased the severity of his self-discipline, and the fervor of his devotion. When he thought of the heavenly mansions, he longed for them, and groaned when he looked at the daily life of man. When he had to eat, and sleep,

* The author was mistaken here, if he meant that the book of Daniel mentions a vision in which an enemy appeared to the prophet. Perhaps the allusion is to a story in the apocryphal book of Susanna.

and comply with the other necessities of the body, he felt ashamed of himself, especially when he thought of the nobler exercises of the soul. Often, therefore, when he was to eat with other monks, and called to mind the food of the soul, he declined, and went far away from them, esteeming it shameful to be seen eating with others. He ate because it was necessary for the body, often by himself, sometimes too with the brethren. He was ashamed when he did it ; but he took occasion to speak freely about such matters.

We ought (said he) to devote all our spare time to the soul, not to the body : a little time must indeed of necessity be given to the body, but let all the rest go in preference to the benefit of the soul, that it may not be degraded by the pleasures of the body, but rather make the body its own servant : for this is what the Saviour said, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, nor wherewith the body shall be clothed : but seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mat. vi. 31).

After this came the persecution which the Emperor Maximin raised against the Church. The holy martyrs having been led to Alexandria, Antony left his monastery and followed them to that city, saying, Let us also go down, that if called, we too may engage in the contest, or at least see them contending :—for Antony had a desire for martyrdom ; but he was not willing to deliver himself to the persecutors.* He attended upon the confessors in the mines and prisons. He accompanied those who were summoned before the judges, and exhorted them to submit readily to martyrdom. When the judge saw the boldness of Antony and

* Because that would have been a sort of self-murder. But he chose to put himself in the way of being apprehended and put to death—which was very little better. Antony had a strong passion for renown, and like some military men, was willing to purchase it by voluntary martyrdom. Martyrs were more honored in the Church than even monks who died a natural death. Those who confessed Christ before heathen judges in time of persecution, were called confessors, and were greatly honored, though they escaped with life.

his associates, he forbade the monks to appear in court, and ordered them to leave the city. The other monks hid themselves for that day; but Antony not only disregarded the order, but washed his monk's coat* to render it more conspicuous; and took his station in a high place directly in front of the judge. He was seen, not only by the judge, but by the governor of the city and his officers, as they passed by. Everybody admired the boldness and intrepidity with which he stood there. He wished to be apprehended and martyred. But too his great sorrow, they took no further notice of him. The Lord preserved him for the benefit of many, that he might teach the ascetic life which he had learned from the Scriptures: For many, by the mere sight of his mode of life, were excited to imitate him. A second time he went, and after his own manner served the confessors; and as if bound with them, he underwent the labors and services to which they were condemned.

When the persecution was over, he left the city, and returned to his monastery, where he applied himself more intensely than ever to his ascetic practice. He fasted continually; he wore inside a hair shirt; outside, a skin. These he kept on to the end of his days. He never washed the dirt from his body. He would not even wash his feet, nor let them touch water when he could help it. No one ever saw him stripped, till his dead body was laid out for burial.

Having shut himself up for a certain time, then, with the resolution that he would neither go out himself, nor let anybody come in, it happened that Martianus, a military officer, arrived during the time, and troubled Antony no little about his daughter, who was infested by a demon. When he continued knocking at his door, and begging him for God's sake to come and pray for

* In Greek *Ependyte*, which seems to denote a sort of upper garment; but the fashion of it is unknown. Those who wish to see a discussion of the various opinions about it, may consult Helyot's *Life of St. Antony*, B. I. ch. ii. Likely enough, as Bolland thought, it was a mellote, or white sheepskin overcoat or mantle. See ch. xxii.

his daughter ; he refused to open the door, but getting up to a high place, he peeped down at him, and said, Man, why do you clamor so at me ? I am a man as well as yourself. If you believe, pray to God, and it will be done. Martianus believed immediately ; and having called upon Christ, he returned home, and his daughter was cleansed from the demon. Many other miracles did the Lord work by him, as he said, *Ask and ye shall receive*. For a great number of afflicted sat outside by the door of his monastery, and by believing and praying there, were healed. Afterwards, the crowd became troublesome to him, and he could not use secret retirement when he chose ; he feared too that those things which the Lord had done by him, might make him think too highly of himself, and make others think so too. He therefore determined to go to the monks of the Upper Thebaid—the farthest part of Egypt—where they knew him not.

14. *Antony goes away into the heart of the desert. Plagued with demons.*

Having got some loaves of the brethren, he seated himself on the river bank, to watch for a passing vessel, in which he might go up the river. While he was looking out, a voice came to him from the air above him, saying, Antony, whither art thou going, and wherefore ? He was not in the least disturbed, for he had been often called in this way. When he heard the questions, he answered, saying, Because the crowd will not let me rest. For this reason I wish to go into the Upper Thebaid, on account of the many disturbances that happen to me, and especially because they require of me things which are above my power. But the voice said unto him, Even if thou goest up to the Upper Thebaid ; or if—as thou hast it in mind—thou comest down among the herds of cattle, thou hast to bear more—yea, two-fold more—labor. If thou wouldst really have quiet, go away now into the heart of the desert. Antony said, And who will show me the way ? for I am ignorant of it. He straightway showed him a company of Saracens about to travel that way. Antony then went to them,

and asked to go with them into the desert. They, as if by order of Divine Providence, readily received him. When he had travelled three days and three nights with them, he came to a very high mountain. At the foot of the mountain, was a spring of clear, sweet, cold water :* a plain spread out from it, and a few wild palm-trees grew there. Antony, as if moved by Divine inspiration, was delighted with the place. This was the place signified by him who had spoken to him on the bank of the river. Therefore, as a supply to begin upon, he got some loaves from his fellow travellers, and remained alone by this mountain. Not a soul staid with him : for, from this time he considered the place as peculiarly his own : and even the Saracens, when they saw Antony's devotion to a solitary life, made it their business to pass that way, and carry him supplies of bread.† The palm-trees also afforded him some pleasant refreshment. The brethren, too, after they learned where he was, being mindful of him as children of a father, took care to send him bread.

But Antony, when he saw that this occasioned them much fatigue and labor, considered how he might spare them all this trouble. When he had fixed upon his plan, he asked some men who where passing that way, to bring him a spade, an axe, and a little wheat. When these were brought, he examined the land about the mountain, and found a suitable spot for cultivation, where he could water it plentifully. Here he sowed his seed. So he did every year, and thus supplied himself with bread : rejoicing that by this means he could support himself without troubling or burdening anybody.‡ Afterwards, when he saw that

* Such springs rarely occur in those dry deserts ; when they do, they are apt to become places of great resort for the Saracens, or wandering Arabs. Date-bearing palm-trees are apt to grow about them. The date is a sweet nutritious nut, and is an important article of food among the Arabs of the desert.

† The wild Arabs have always had great reverence for saints, especially for those who lived a solitary ascetic life, and were very dirty, as St. Antony was.

‡ Antony was a good old ignorant superstitious enthusiast, who, with all

travellers often came that way, he planted a few seeds of garden vegetables, that the traveller might have something to refresh him, after the fatigues of his difficult journey through the desert.

But the wild beasts of the desert, coming to the spring for water, often injured his crops. Having caught one of these intruders, without hurting him, he thus addressed them all: Why do ye injure me, when I do you no harm? Go now, all of you, in the name of the Lord, and never again set foot upon my premises. From that hour, the beasts, as if awed by the command, never again came near the place. So he lived alone in the mountain,* devoted to prayer and fasting. But the brethren, who ministered to him, besought that he would suffer them to come once a-month, and bring him olives, beans, and oil: for he was now old, and led a hard life there, and had many a battle with the demons: as we have been told by those who visited him: For they heard there tumults, and many voices, and a clashing, as of arms. By night, they saw the mountain full of wild beasts, and himself they beheld, as it were, fighting with the apparitions, and praying against them. On these occasions he encouraged his visitors; and himself fought upon his knees, praying to the Lord. He was truly worthy of admiration, because, being alone in such a desert, he dreaded neither the assaults of demons, nor the ferocity of the numerous wild beasts and serpents that were there. Then the Devil, as David saith in the Psalm, (xxxvii. 12), *watched him and gnashed upon him with his teeth*. But Antony, by calling upon the Saviour, continued unhurt by his trickery and subtile schemes. While Antony was watching by night, the Devil let loose upon

his erroneous notions, had, in some essential points, the heart of a true Christian, as the fact just related demonstrates. How different was he, in this particular, from the swarms of good-for-nothing, lazy, fanatical, beggar-monks, who long afterwards arose in the Church, and continue among the Roman Catholics to this day, doing no service (for their idle bead-roll mutterings are not worth a straw) and living upon the alms of the laboring population!

* This mountain stands near the shore of the Red Sea. Compare Jerome's description of the place, in his *Life of Hilarion*, § 31.

him the wild beasts : nearly all the hyenas of the desert came out of their holes, and surrounded him, grinning and threatening to bite. Antony, observing what the enemy would be at, said to them all ;—If ye have received power against me, come on ; I am ready to be devoured by you ; but if the demons have put this into your heads,—then, not a moment longer, but begone with you ! I am the servant of Christ. Hardly had Antony got out these words, before they scampered away, as if driven by the whip of his word.*

A few days afterwards, Antony was at work, making a basket, when somebody standing at the door, drew the string that he was using at his work. By the by, he usually gave the baskets that he made to his visitors, for anything that they chose to offer him. When he felt his basket-string pulled, he rose up and beheld a monster, like a man down to his thighs, but his legs and feet were like those of an ass. Antony only crossed himself and said ; I am Christ's servant ; if thou art sent against me ; behold, here I am. But the beast with his demons fled in such a hurry, that he fell and broke his neck. Now the death of the beast was the defeat of the demons. Their scheme was, by means of him, to carry Antony out of the desert ; but they were not able.

15. *More miracles, and some good advice.*

Having been besought once by the monks to come down and pay them a visit, and see the places where they lived, he travelled with the monks who had come after him. A camel carried their bread and water ; for the whole of that desert is without drinkable water, excepting in the mountain where Antony lived. Their water failing by the way, and the weather being excessively hot,

* This story, like some novels, may be "founded on fact." The African hyena is a bold beast, and by night scruples not to come into houses, prowling for garbage. Several together may have entered Antony's cell, and been frightened away by his loud Quixotic speech. The old man's excited imagination may have multiplied them into "all the hyenas of the mountains," and of course sent by the Devil.

they were all in danger of perishing. They searched all around for water, but found none; and their strength failed, so that they were unable to walk, and had to lie down upon the ground. They let their camel go wherever he pleased, giving themselves up for lost. The old man seeing their desperate case, groaned for sorrow, then going a little way from the rest, he kneeled, lifted up his hands, and prayed. Straightway the Lord made a fountain of water burst forth at the spot where he was praying. So all drank and were refreshed. Then having filled their skins with water, they sought their camel and found him;* for his halter happened to be caught by a stone; so he was held fast. Having led him to the spring and given him a drink, they put the water-skins upon him and went their way. When they arrived at the outer monasteries,† all embraced and kissed him as a father; and he, as bringing them supplies from the mountain, entertained them with discourses, and made them partakers of the fruits of his experience. Again, there was joy in the mountains, zeal for improvement, and mutual exhortation through faith. Then he also rejoiced, seeing the ready-mindedness of the monks, and seeing also his sister, who had grown old in virginity, and presided over other virgins. After some time, he returned again to the mountain. Then at last many monks visited him, and others who had diseases ventured to come. The monks who came, he exhorted continually to faith, love, and purity of mind: he directed them to avoid carnal pleasures, and vain-glory; to pray without ceasing, to sing psalms before and after sleep; to repeat the Scripture commands, and remember the acts of the saints, that their minds might be excited to imitation. Above all, he admonished them to meditate continually upon the saying of the apostle, Let not the

* Camels can smell water in the desert, a long way off. But we dare not insinuate that this most wonderful fountain was discovered by the camel's nose, while Antony was praying. Even then a sort of miracle might have been made of it; but not near so good as the one which we have.

† That is, the monasteries on the outer verge of the desert, in the mountains that bound the Valley of the Nile.

sun go down upon your wrath. (Eph. iv. 26.) This he thought was meant, not of anger alone, but of every sin. Let every man, said he, daily call himself to account for his actions by night and by day. If he have sinned, let him cease; if not, let him not glory, but persevere without relaxing in his duties. Let him not condemn his neighbor, nor justify himself, but await the day of judgment: for a man is often unconsciously guilty of sins which God knows. Leaving the judgment to God, let us sympathize with one another, and bear one another's burdens. Let us examine ourselves strictly, and strenuously endeavor to amend our failings. A good way to detect and avoid sin, is for one to write down candidly his outward actions and his exercises of mind, as he would tell them to another; and he will assuredly feel ashamed of some of them, and sin no more. For why should any one, by sinning, wish to injure himself? Or who, after he has sinned, does not cheat himself by concealing it? Therefore, as we would not commit fornication in the sight of others, so, if we declare our thoughts to ourselves by writing them down, we shall better guard ourselves from filthy imaginations, being ashamed to expose them to our own eyes. Then let the writing serve us instead of the eyes of our fellow ascetics; that, blushing as much to write our evil thoughts, as to let others see them, we may banish them from our minds. By conforming ourselves to this rule, we shall be able to subdue the body, to please the Lord, and to frustrate the schemes of the enemy.*

Such were the precepts which Antony gave to those who met him. He sympathized and prayed with the afflicted, and *in many cases*, the Lord heard him, and healed them. But then he neither boasted when he was heard, nor murmured when he was not,† but always gave thanks to the Lord. He exhorted the sick to be

* With the exception of a little too much ascetism at the beginning, we can heartily recommend those rules to the reader's attention and observance.

† He often failed in his efforts to heal the sick;—and when by the power of imagination or otherwise, they got better, it was deemed a miracle!

patient, and to consider that to heal was not in his nor any man's power, but only in God's. Thus the afflicted received this benefit at least, that they learned from Antony's discourses to bear their sufferings patiently, and if they were healed, to thank not Antony, but God only, for the blessing.

16. *Miracles ! Miracles !*

There was one Fronto, a courtier, who had a dreadful malady ; for he had gnawed off his tongue, and appeared likely also to injure his eyes. He came to the mountain and besought Antony to pray for him. Antony prayed, and then told him to return to Egypt and he would be healed of his fits. Fronto at first refused to go, and staid several days ; until Antony said to him, If you stay here, you cannot be healed. Go, and as soon as you enter Egypt, you will see a sign that will be given you. He believed and went. No sooner had he seen Egypt, than he felt himself to be a sound man.

Again, a certain virgin of Busiris had a sore and disgusting malady. Her tears, her mucus, and the moisture from her ears, when they fell to the ground, became maggots. Her body was paralyzed, and her eyes were not natural. Her parents, hearing that some monks were going to Antony, and believing in the Lord, who had once healed a woman's issue of blood (Mat. ix. 20), begged that they might accompany them with their daughter. The monks consented. The parents and child remained outside of the mountain with Paphnutius, a confessor* and monk. The others entered and had scarcely begun to tell Antony about the virgin, when he anticipated them, described the girl's disease and told of her having travelled with them. When they asked that she and her parents might come in, he would not permit it ; but—said he—do you go out to the place, and you will find her

* Those who, in times of persecution, confessed before the judges that they were Christians, and were ready to undergo any punishment rather than deny Christ, were called confessors, if they were not put to death, martyrs, if they were.

either dead or cured : for, as I have no power to perform such a cure, it is useless to bring her to me, miserable man as I am. It is the Lord who has healed the poor woman, out of regard to her prayers, and he hath only revealed to me that he would do it in that place. The miracle was performed accordingly ; for when they went out, they found her healed, and the parents rejoicing.

Again ; two brethren were coming out of Egypt to see him ; but their water having failed, the one was dead and the other almost dead, for he was unable to travel, and lay down, expecting to die. But Antony, sitting in his mountain cell, called two monks who happened to be there, and said, Take quickly a pitcher of water, and run down the road towards Egypt ; for two brethren are on the way ; one has died, and the other will die unless you make haste ; for so it has been revealed to me when praying. The monks went accordingly ; and found the one's dead body, which they buried ; but the other they restored by means of the water, and brought him to the old man. The distance was a day's journey. Now, should any one ask, Why did not Antony send off the monks in time to save the other ? He would wrong Antony ; for the determination whether the man should live or die, was with God only ; Antony could do nothing till the revelation came to him.

Another time, Antony was sitting in the mountain, and looking up he saw one carried up on high, and a joyful band meeting him. Filled with wonder, he pronounced them a band of the blessed, and prayed to learn what this might be. And straightway came a voice to him, saying, This is the soul of Ammon, the monk of Nitria, who led an ascetic life down to his old age. Thus spake the voice. Now the distance from Nitria to Antony's cell in the mountain was thirteen days' journey. Those who were present, seeing Antony filled with wonder, asked him the cause of it. He answered that Ammon had just ended his life. This monk was well known to Antony by reason of his frequent visits, and his numerous miracles ; of which this was one. Ammon once having need to cross the river Lycus, when it was high, re-

quested Theodorus who was with him, to go some distance apart from him, that they might not see one another naked, when they crossed the water. When Theodorus was gone, he still felt ashamed to see himself naked. Whilst he considered what he should do to avoid this shame, he was suddenly carried over to the other side. When Theodorus had crossed and met him there without wet, he desired to know how he had passed over; but he refused to tell. Then Theodorus embraced his feet, and vowed that he would not let him go, until he was informed. Ammon out of regard partly to his earnestness, and partly to his vow,—after charging him not to speak of it during his life-time,—explained the matter to him. He had been carried over the water without touching it, not by human hands, but by divine power. Theodorus told this after Ammon's death. The monks to whom Antony spoke of his death noted the day. Thirty days afterwards some brethren from Nitria arrived with the intelligence of his death. He had died the very day and hour in which Antony saw his soul ascending. The monks admired the purity of Antony's mind, who could see what had happened at such a great distance.

The Count Archelaus once happening to find him praying alone, outside of his cell in the mountain, asked him to intercede for Polycratea, an admirable virgin of Laodicea; for she was dreadfully afflicted in her stomach and side, and was altogether enfeebled in body, from excessive ascetism—that is, fasting and other bodily mortifications.* Antony prayed accordingly. The Count noted the day on which the prayer was made. On returning to Laodicea, he found that the virgin had got well on that very day.

He often predicted, days—sometimes even a month—beforehand, not only the coming of brethren, but also the cause of their coming. Some came simply to see him; others, because they were sick; and others again, because they were infested by

* Many persons thus destroyed their health and their lives, as we learn by occasional hints in the Fathers, most of whom, in their superstitious zeal for monkery, seldom alluded to cases of this sort.

demons: None of them esteemed the fatigue of the journey, either an annoyance or a loss; for every one felt the benefit of it.

Going down once again to the outer monasteries, he was asked to go on board of a vessel and pray with the monks. He alone perceived a nauseous and very strong smell. The crew of the vessel said that there was pickled fish in the vessel, and that this caused the smell. Antony replied that there was a stink of something else. While he spoke, a young man, who had a demon, and lay hid in the hold, cried out: but the demon, being rebuked in the name of our Lord, went out, and the young man was healed. Then all knew that the demon had made the stench.

There was another, a man of distinction, who was so possessed by the demon, that he was ignorant of his having come to Antony, and ate the excrements of his own body. Those who brought him, entreated Antony to pray for him. Antony, pitying the poor young man, prayed, and watched over him all the night. At day-break the young man suddenly ran at Antony and pushed him. Those that came with him were angry at this; but Antony said, Be not angry with the young man; for it was not he who did it, but the demon within him; who being rebuked, and ordered to be gone into dry places, raved and went. Therefore give glory to the Lord; for the demon's assault upon me is a sign to you of his departure. Whilst Antony was saying these things, the young man was restored to his right mind, knew where he was, embraced the old man, and gave thanks to God.

A great many monks have with one accord related numbers more of his miracles;* but these are not so wonderful as others of a different sort that appear still more wonderful.

* Yes, set monks to telling miraculous stories, and they will always have enough of them. Their lives are so monotonous and insipid; they have so little of nature, of reason, or of learning in them, or about them, and such dreamy fanatical notions of spiritual things, that miracles become as necessary a stimulant to them as brandy to a languid sot. Yet grave Fathers of the Church gathered up all their wonderful stories, and used all their authority to give them currency as sacred verities.

17. *Antony's wonderful visions about the passage of souls, and the Devil's attempt to seize them.*

Once when he was going to eat, and had risen up to pray, about the ninth hour, he felt himself rapt into a trance; and—strange to tell—he saw himself, as it were, carried out of himself, and conducted by certain ones through the air: then he saw certain malignant and terrible beings standing in the air and stopping up his way, so that he could not pass. When his conductors strove with them they demanded that he should give an account of himself, as if he were responsible to them. They wishing then to take up the account from the day of his birth, Antony's conductors forbade it, saying that the Lord had blotted out these earlier matters, but that they might begin their examination of him from the time that he became a monk and had consecrated himself to God. Then they brought accusations against him; but as they could not convict him, they gave way, and allowed him free passage. Then immediately he saw himself come back and stand near himself, and presently he found himself to be all Antony again. Then indeed he forgot to eat; and so he continued the rest of the day, and the whole night, groaning and praying: for he was astonished to see with what hosts we have to contend, and what hard work one has to get along through the air: and he remembered the apostle's saying—*According to the prince of the power of the air* (Eph. ii. 2):* for in the air the enemy has the power, by fighting and tempting, to hinder those who are passing. Wherefore he commended the saying, *Put on the whole*

* St. Paul here speaks according to the common opinion among those to whom he wrote. We are not to infer that he meant to teach it as a doctrine of revelation, no more than we are to infer, from a similar allusion of our Saviour, that the disciples of the Pharisees actually cast out demons. (Luke xi. 19.) In our account of the Greek philosophy and the opinions of Philo the Jew, we noticed this opinion concerning demons in the air. We take from Rosenmüller's note on Eph. ii. 2, the following extracts from Greek writers: Diogenes Laertius says, "The whole atmosphere is full of spirits, which are thought to be demons and heroes." And Plutarch says, "The air beneath and the heavens above are full of gods and demons."

armor of God, &c. (Eph. vi. 13.) Let us also remember the words of the apostle, saying, Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell. (2 Cor. xii. 2.)

Antony had, moreover, this gift. If at any time, when he was sitting alone, in the mountain, he doubted in himself concerning anything, this was revealed to him by Providence, while he was praying; as it is written, *The saint is taught of God*.* (John vi. 45.)

After the vision just mentioned he was once conversing with some who were with him, about the way in which the soul passed into a future state, and what sort of a place it would have there. The next night some one from above called to him, and said, Antony, arise—come forth, and see. Then he arose (for he knew to whom he ought to give ear), and beheld a tall, gloomy, and terrible form, whose stature reached to the clouds, and other forms ascending as if with wings. The giant form stretched forth his hands, and arrested some of the ascending spirits; but others of them flew above him, and passing by, had then a free passage upwards. The monster gnashed his teeth when these escaped him, but rejoiced over those that fell.† Then came a voice to Antony, saying, Consider the vision. His understanding being opened, he perceived it to represent the passage of souls—the tall figure to be the Devil, who envies the faithful, and who seizes and stops those that are liable to his arrest, but cannot lay hold on those that fly above him, because they have not obeyed him.

After he saw this vision, considering it as an admonition to

* This is not correctly quoted here.

† It is pleasant to find among the vapid imaginings of monkery a truly poetical conception, like this of old Antony. His vast gloomy devil, with his feet on the earth and his head in the clouds, is not inferior to Camoens's Spirit of the Cape, so much admired by the critics. But in awfully descriptive power, nothing of the kind is equal to Job's vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, when a spirit passed before his face, and made the hair of his flesh stand up; when the image whose form he could not discern stood still before his eyes, and a voice sounded in his ears, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job. iv. 13.)

himself, he strove hard to make farther progress, every day, in his exercises of prayer and fasting. But as to the vision, he could scarcely be persuaded to tell it. But the long time that he spent in his prayers on that occasion, raised the curiosity of his companions, and their eager inquiries at length drew it from him—he believing that the narration would be useful to them.

18. *How Antony was taken to Alexandria to preach against the Arians.*

He held all clergymen in the greatest honor. He was not ashamed to bow his head before bishops and priests: and if a deacon at any time met with him, and discoursed in a profitable manner, he yielded him the precedence in prayer, for he was not ashamed to learn from any one. He often asked questions for information, and deigned to hear all who were present.

He possessed a wonderful grace of countenance, insomuch that a stranger visiting a company of monks, would at first sight be attracted by his look, and attach himself to him in preference to the rest. Yet he was not taller nor larger than the others: it was by his kindliness and ease of manner, and by the purity of his mind, that he won all hearts. His look was always serene and cheerful, showing a soul undisturbed by evil passions.

Excellent and admirable also were his faith and piety. For he would have nothing to do with the Meletian schismatics,* after he knew their wickedness and apostasy from the church. Nor would he associate with the Manichees,† or any other heretics, except

* Followers of Meletius, an Egyptian bishop, who was deposed from his office by a party headed by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, but being sustained by a large minority, he made a schism which continued a long time. His enemies charged him with having sacrificed to idols in the late persecution. He alleged that the cause of their enmity was his opposition to Peter's indulgent policy towards those who had apostatized. The monks were of Peter's party.

† Followers of Mani, a Persian, who incorporated the Magian doctrine of two eternal principles with Christianity. According to the Manichees, the good principle is God, represented by light—the evil principle, matter,

so far as to admonish them, and exhort them to turn to the true religion : for he considered and declared that their friendship and society were destructive to the soul. He also abominated the heresy of the Arians, and exhorted the faithful never to go near them, nor to touch their corrupt doctrine. So when once some Arians came to visit him, and he discovered that they belonged to this impious sect, he drove them away from the mountain, saying, that their doctrines were worse than the poison of serpents : and when some Arians once told him, falsely, that their opinions agreed with his, he was filled with indignation and wrath against them.

Afterwards, at the request of the bishops and all the brethren, he left his mountain and went down to Alexandria, and preached violently against the Arians, saying that theirs was the last heresy and the forerunner of Antichrist. He taught the people that the Son of God was no creature, but the Eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father. Wherefore, said he, have no fellowship with these abominably impious Arians. You are Christians ; but they who say that the Son and Word of God is a created being, are no better than the heathen, who worship the creature rather than the Creator. Believe me, that the whole creation is angry with them for putting the Creator and Lord of all things in the number of creatures.

The people all rejoiced to see so great a man denouncing and

endued with a living energy, called also the Devil, and represented by darkness. Matter being essentially evil, the body is therefore the prison of the soul, and the cause of its vice and misery. They denied the reality of Christ's body, supposing that a divine being would not unite himself with the evil principle. With such a foundation for their system, they would of course adopt ascetic rules of living. They divided their community into two classes, the elect, who were severely ascetic, practicing continence, and all the bodily mortifications of monkery, and the auditors, who were allowed to marry if they could not contain, but were taught to fast much, and live austere. The Manichees rose in the third century, agreed in fundamentals with the Gnostics that preceded them, were diffused over Christendom, and continued for ages.

cursing this anti-Christian heresy. All the people of the city ran together to see Antony. Even the heathen part of the people, and those called their priests, came to the church, asking to see the man of God, as everybody called him. There, too, the Lord by him purified many of demons and of insanity. Many of the heathen, too, requested that they might only touch him, believing that it would do them good. Verily, as many were converted to Christianity in those few days, as we usually see in a whole year.*

When some supposed that he must be troubled by the crowds that surrounded him, he said that he was not; that he had struggled with quite as numerous crowds of demons in the desert. When he left us and we had attended him as far as the city gate, a woman came bawling after us, Stop! stop, thou man of God: my daughter is woefully vexed with demons; stop, I pray thee, or I shall kill myself with running. The old man stopped; and when the woman came near, her daughter was jerked to the ground by the demon. When Antony prayed, the unclean spirit

* Athanasius spent his life in battling with the Arians, who denied that the Son was of the same substance with the Father, though they affirmed his divinity and likeness to the Father. They were a strong party in Alexandria, as well as in other parts of the church, and several times got the emperor to banish Athanasius from the city. Hence he hated them with a perfect hatred.

He knew what he was about, when he brought the famous dirty old monk from the desert to work upon the minds of the Alexandrian populace, against the Arian party. The untaught multitude are always mightily taken with such characters. Many a wonderful report had they heard in Alexandria of St. Antony's doings in the deserts of Upper Egypt, four hundred miles away—of his fastings, prayings, miracles, battles with demons—and of his not having washed himself, nor changed his rough garments, nor cut nor combed his hair, or beard, for at least fifty years. Wonderful man! Wonderful saint! No wonder that they ran in crowds to see such a body and such a soul. The fact that he was totally illiterate was to them an argument that he was a heaven-taught expounder of the mysteries of the Godhead. Had he not conversed with the angels, and did he not know divine mysteries better than learned doctors of divinity? These sentiments were common to the heathen and the Christian populace.

went out, and the girl got up sound well. Then the old man departed for his own home in the mountain.

19. *How Antony out-witted the philosophers.*

It is wonderful how prudent and how sharp-witted Antony was, considering that he had never learned to read.

Two Greek philosophers came to him, one day, in the outer mountain [next to the Nile], thinking that they could confound him. When he saw them, he knew by their looks what they were.* He said to them, by an interpreter,† Heigh, philosophers! Do you put yourselves to all this trouble to visit a fool? They answered [perhaps ironically], You are no fool, but a wise man. Antony replied, If you have come to see a fool, you have lost your labor: but if, as you say, I am a wise man, then be what I am; for it is good to imitate a good thing. If I had gone to see you, I should have imitated you: but as you have come to see me, be Christians, as I am a Christian. The philosophers retired, admiring Antony; for they saw he was qualified to make demons afraid of him.

Others of the same sort came to him in the outer mountain, intending to make sport out of him, because he was illiterate. Antony said to them, Which is better, good sense or learning? And which is the cause of the other? good sense, of learning? or learning, of good sense? They answered, Good sense is to be preferred, and is the inventor of learning. Well, then, said Antony, he who has a sound mind has no need of learning. This reply confounded the philosophers, and they went away, wondering how an illiterate man could have so much wit.‡

* Professed philosophers distinguished themselves by wearing beards, and a cloak of singular fashion. The Platonic Christian philosophers generally adopted the same habit.

† Antony knew only the Coptic, that is, the Egyptian language.

‡ In both these instances Antony showed a ready wit: in the former, the turn that he took upon the philosophers was admirable; in the latter, it was ingenious, but by no means conclusive. If the philosophers had possessed half the mother-wit of old Antony, they could readily have

Another time, some, who were esteemed wise men by the Greeks, came to demand of him a reason for our faith in Christ, —thinking that they could turn his argument to ridicule. He paused awhile, and then said to them, through an interpreter, Which is better, to confess the cross of Christ, or to attribute adultery and sodomy to those whom you believe to be Gods? [NOTE.—Here Athanasius puts a long argument into the mouth of Antony. Most of it would be uninteresting to the reader; we therefore omit it all, except a few select passages, which contain something striking.]

“Which is better, to say that the Word of God assumed a human body, that, by partaking of human nature, he might make men partakers of a divine and intellectual nature; or to liken the Divine nature to brutes, and on that account to worship four-footed beasts, and reptiles, and images of men?*. For these are objects of worship to your wise men. And how dare you scoff at us for saying that Christ appeared as man, when you yourselves say that the soul—which you consider a distinct thing from the intelligent mind—went astray, and fell from the circle of the heavens into a body; and that it transmigrates not only into the human body, but also into the bodies of beasts and reptiles?†

replied, that man has need not only of sound natural sense, but of the improvement in knowledge which is best acquired by means of books. In respect even to religion, what would it be without letters? And what would all men be without them, but savages? But perhaps the philosophers considered it useless to present such an argument to an illiterate monk, who could not appreciate its force, and who thought that this world, and these bodies, which God had made for us, were very contemptible contrivances; who thought, moreover, that the best way to please the Creator of the world, was to reject the gifts that he offered us, hate the pleasures that he had prepared for us, and to renounce, as far as possible, the earthly life which he had assigned us.

* Brute worship was a part of the old Egyptian superstition, but the philosophers did not adopt or advocate that absurdity. As to image worship, the Catholic Church had not yet borrowed it of the idolaters, as she did afterwards, in spite of the Divine prohibition.

† The philosophers held that the animal soul of man was earth-born,

You depend on demonstrative reasonings to establish your doctrines; and having this art, you would also have us not to worship God without argumentative proof. Now tell me: How are facts, and especially how is the knowledge of God, most accurately ascertained? Is it by demonstration of reason? or by energy of faith? Which is older, faith wrought in the soul, or demonstration by reason? The philosophers admitted that inwrought faith was older. You say well (continued Antony), for faith springs from an affection of the soul; logic from human art. Therefore to those in whom faith has been wrought, demonstration by reasoning is unnecessary, if not superfluous; for what we understand by faith, you endeavor to prove by arguments. We are often unable to express what we understand by faith; so that the operation of faith is better than the operation of your sophistical arguments.”*

“Behold the martyrs despising death for Christ’s sake. Behold the virgins of the Church, who, for Christ’s sake, keep their bodies pure and unpolluted. These are sufficient tokens to show that the Christian faith is the only true religion. You are now unbelieving, because you demand [philosophical] reasons and and that it was the rational soul, or intellect, which “went astray and fell.” The doctrine of transmigration was common through nearly all the ancient world. It seems to have originated from the idea that this corporeal life is a state of punishment. The same doctrine became current among the Jews after the captivity.

* Learned infidels have laid hold of passages like this in the Fathers, in order to show that the early Christians repudiated reason, and relied solely upon the power of faith to establish the truth of their religion. It is true that the Fathers generally were unskillful reasoners, and often made use of silly and unfounded arguments. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that they disclaimed rational grounds of conviction, and relied solely on faith wrought in the soul by Divine Power. Even here, old Antony professes to exhibit external evidence of the truth of Christianity. His meaning—or rather that of Athanasius—was, that Christians did not prove their religion by that sort of abstract reasoning which the philosophers employed to establish the truth of their system of philosophy. He was right. Christianity comes by revelation: philosophy by reason alone.

arguments. We do not use the persuasive arguments of the Grecian philosophy (1 Cor. ii. 4), but by faith we give a clear confirmation of what we teach. Behold here are some men suffering from demons.”

Then Antony brought forward several who were troubled with demons, and said, Can you heal these men by your reasonings? or by any art or magic, calling upon your idols? Saying these things he called upon the name of Christ, marked the demoniacs with the sign of the cross, a first, second, and third time. Immediately these men were perfectly healed of their insanity. The philosophers wondered at Antony’s wisdom, and at the miracle which was performed.*

20. *Containing sundry matters.*

The fame of Antony extended even to the imperial court. The emperor Constantine, and his sons Constantius and Constans, wrote to him as a father, and requested an answer. But he had *no respect for the art of writing*, and took no pleasure in letters. He was unwilling, therefore, to receive the emperor’s letter, because he was unable to write an answer. But being told by the monks that the imperial family were Christians, and if he thus cast them off they would be offended, he suffered the letter to be read to him, and dictated an answer to the effect that he was glad to hear they worshiped Christ. He admonished them not to

* The belief in demons, demoniacal possessions, and magic, was universal in this age, and for many ages both before and afterwards. To cast out demons from the possessed, who were generally lunatic or epileptic, was supposed to require the power of God, or of magic, by which the aid of a superior demon was obtained, or else the aid of some natural object which had an occult virtue to expel demons. Our Saviour exhibited divine power by healing instantly before his enemies those known to be incurable by human art. But this story of Antony’s healing the demoniacs is very suspicious. He had his *professed* demoniacs ready for the occasion. It was easy to feign madness or epilepsy. If the philosophers wondered and suspected nothing, we should remember that philosophers are sometimes very credulous and not very wise.

think highly of present things, but rather to remember the future judgment, and to know that Christ alone is the true and eternal king. He exhorted them to be humane and just, and mindful of the poor. They rejoiced when they received this letter.

After these things he returned again to the mountain, in the heart of the desert, and applied himself to his usual exercise. Often when he sat or walked with those present, he would be struck dumb with amazement, for the space of an hour, after which he would pursue his conversation with the brethren, who knew from this that he had seen a vision. For, oftentimes, when he was in the mountain, events then happening in Egypt, would be presented to him in vision.

Once when he was seated in company he fell into a trance, and groaned heavily at the vision he saw. After an hour, he turned to the company, groaned, trembled, stood up and prayed, and then falling upon his knees he continued long in that posture. When he rose at last, weeping, the brethren importuned him to tell them what the matter was. At last he said, Children, would that I had died before I saw this vision. Wrath is coming upon the Church; she will be delivered to men who are like natural brute beasts. I have seen mules standing round the Lord's table, kicking and leaping in wild disorder. You heard how I groaned, when a voice said, My altar will become an abomination. This was the old man's vision. Two years afterwards the Arians made that inroad upon Egypt which yet continues.* During the Arian persecution, a certain prefect, named Balacius, in his zeal for Arianism, treated the (Catholic) Christians with great cruelty. He beat the virgins, and, stripping the monks, scourged them with whips. Antony sent some brethren to him, with a letter to

* By a decree of the Emperor Constantius, Athanasius was banished for the third time from Alexandria, and the Arians were put in possession of the churches. They committed many outrages upon the Catholics. As to Father Antony's prophecy of this event, we suspect that it was not *published* before it was fulfilled. Antony, being a sagacious old man, may have expressed some apprehensions beforehand that such a thing would happen. If so, his disciples would believe that he prophesied it.

this effect: I see the wrath of God impending over you. Cease to persecute the Christians, lest it fall upon you, as it will in a very short time. Balacius laughed at the letter, threw it on the ground, spit upon it, and said insultingly to those who brought it, Go tell Antony, that since he takes the monks under his protection, I shall soon come upon him.

Five days had not passed before the wrath overtook him. He rode out of the city with Nestorius, President of Egypt. Both horses belonged to Balacius, and were the gentlest that he had. They had scarcely reached the open country, when the horses became playful, as horses confined in a stable are apt to be when they get out. Suddenly, the horse which Nestorius rode, in snapping at the other, gave the thigh of Balacius such a lacerating bite that he had to be carried into the city. In three days he died.

Such was the influence of Antony over those who visited him, that many, even of the soldiers and of the wealthy, left the cares and burdens of this life, and became monks. He was indeed as a heaven-born physician to Egypt. For who went to him in sorrow, and did not come back rejoicing? Who went to him in anger, and was not converted into a friend? What poor man met him, with a dejected heart, who, after he saw and heard him, did not go away despising riches, and content with poverty? If a monk was remiss, he excited him to diligence. If a young man went to the mountain and beheld Antony, he straightway renounced pleasure and embraced a life of temperance. Whosoever came to him, tempted by a demon, was relieved; or if troubled with evil thoughts and reasonings, was tranquilized. For this was the grand attainment of Antony's exercise, that, as I said before, he had the gift of discerning spirits, and knew all their movements, and what was each one's aim and inclination. Not only was he himself free from their delusions, but he could advise those troubled in mind how to defeat their designs, by describing to them the weakness of the inworking demons, and their villainous acts. Thus each one being trained for the contest, went forth courageously against the devices of the devil and his demons.

Many virgins already espoused* to men, by merely seeing Antony at a distance, remained virgins for Christ.

21. *Antony's Death.*

How he ended his life, it becomes me also to relate, and you to hear with diligent attention; for in this also he was worthy of imitation.

According to custom, he visited the monks in the outer mountain; and being providentially warned of his approaching end, he said to the brethren: This is my last visit, and I shall think it strange if we ever meet again in this life. It is time for me to depart, for I am nearly 105 years old. When they heard this they wept, fell upon the old man's neck and kissed him. But he, as if going home from a foreign land, conversed with them cheerfully, and exhorted them to persevere in their labor and exercise, to live daily as if they were dying, diligently to guard their hearts against evil thoughts, to be zealous for the saints, and not to go near the schismatic Meletians. And (said he) have nothing to do with the Arians, whose impiety is manifested to all.

When the brethren insisted that he should stay and end his days with them, he refused, principally for this reason: The Egyptians are accustomed to embalm the bodies of their dead, especially of the holy martyrs, and to wrap them in linen cloths, but not to bury them in the ground. They lay them on couches, and keep them in private apartments of their houses. But Antony disapproved of this, and had often remonstrated against it with the bishops, and people, as contrary to the custom of the patriarchs and the example of our Lord. Fearing that his body might be treated in this way, he hastened away to the interior mountain where he had usually resided.

Here, after a few months, he was taken sick. He had, during

* Virgins of the East were often espoused long before the marriage was consummated. Antony must have emitted a powerful anti-matrimonial influence, when a distant sight of him was sufficient to dissolve a marriage contract. What would a touch have done?

the last fifteen years, kept two monks here with him, who ministered to him on account of his great age. To these he repeated his frequent exhortations and charges to others—never to relax in the exercise, not to fear the demons, and to have nothing to do with schismatics and Arian heretics. He charged them not to suffer his body to be carried into Egypt to be kept in houses, but to bury it in the earth and conceal the place.* Finally, he made his will. “Distribute my clothes (said he)—Give one of my sheepskins to Athanasius, the bishop, and also my undercoat, which he gave me when it was new, and I now return to him well-worn. Give my other sheepskin to Sarapion, the bishop. Keep my hair-shirt for yourselves. Finally, children, farewell; for Antony is passing away, and will be with you no more.”—So saying, he stretched out his feet, and with a smiling countenance, expired. They buried him, according to his directions, and to this day no one knows where his body is hidden, except those two brethren.

The sheepskins and coat which he had worn, were thankfully received, and are kept as things of great value.

From this brief narrative you may judge how great a man Antony was, who from youth to extreme old age, steadfastly persevered in his ascetic life. He never indulged his old age with better food, nor his infirmity with a change of clothing; nor did he ever wash his feet. Yet he continued sound in all his members. His eyesight was unimpaired to the last, and his teeth were sound, though worn to mere stumps by long use. He retained also the perfect use of his feet and hands; and in fine, was more sleek and vigorous than those who use variety of food, washing, and change of clothing. His fame spread through all the Roman Empire, from his remote habitation in the desert mountain. That which rendered him famous, was neither learning nor worldly wisdom, nor human art; but only his piety towards God. And let this be known to all the brethren, that them who live as monks ought to do, will the Lord not only lead to heaven,

* See Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*, § 31, near the end.

but render illustrious and renowned through all the earth, however deeply they may hide themselves in the desert.

APPENDIX.

From Socrates's Hist. Eccl. Book IV. Ch. 23.

A philosopher said to Antony: How can you live without the consolation of books? My books, O philosopher, said Antony, is the nature of the things created; and I can readily, when I will, read the word of God.

From the same, Ch. 25.

It is said that Antony, when he went to Alexandria on account of the Arians, met with blind Didymus; and finding out how sensible a man he was, said to him: O Didymus, let not the loss of your external eyes grieve you, for with such eyes even gnats and flies can see; but rejoice that you have the eyes with which angels see, and God himself is seen, and his light is apprehended.

Concluding Note.

Having gone through the life of St. Antony, we cannot refuse him the parting tribute of our admiration for the real greatness of his character. He was the prince of the hermits, and the founder of monachism among Christians. Perfectly illiterate, and a recluse in a desert for eighty years, the force of his mere example was such as to draw thousands after him, and to establish an institution that soon spread through the Church, and for 1500 years has continued to exert a powerful influence over the minds of men.

Those qualities in Antony which made his example so influential, were, first, his steadfastness of purpose, and secondly the natural strength of his intellect. Setting out upon the principle,

that what he understood to be the commands of Christ, he would obey to the letter ; he did so with an unwavering resolution during eighty-five years ; denying himself every earthly comfort, which the soul naturally desires, and the God of nature benevolently offers. While we condemn the error of his views, we must admire the steadfastness of his adherence to what he conceived to be his duty to Christ.

He was conscious of a strength of mind, which he conceived to make the aid of other men unnecessary, either for his instruction, or his confirmation in the path of duty. He relied upon himself alone, and the occasional help of God, to conquer all the hosts of darkness and all the passions of his nature. And in his way he did conquer. Then he had a sagacity, a ready wit, a persuasive power of thought, which completed his character, and fitted him to be the captain of all who were disposed to war against nature

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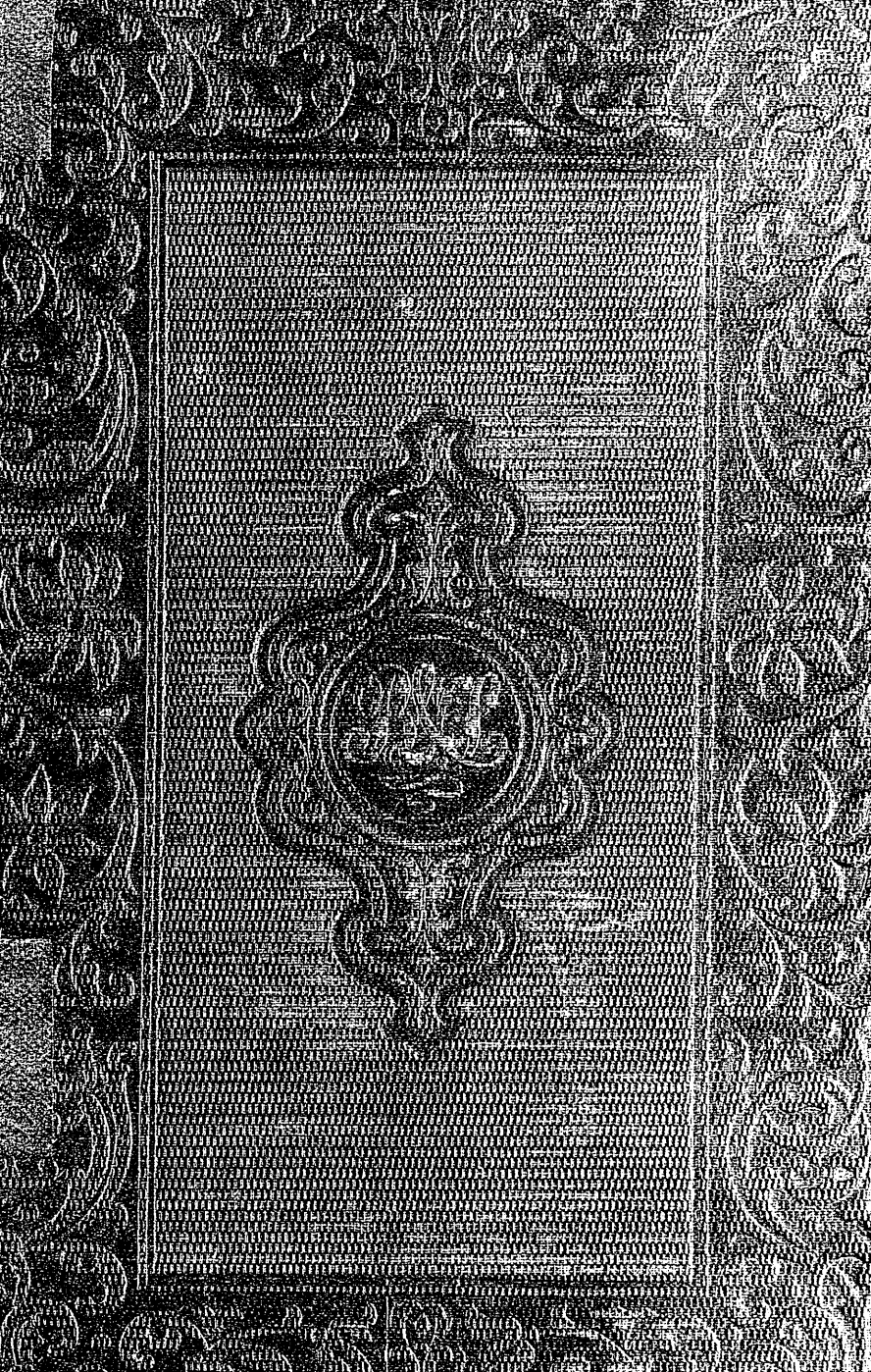
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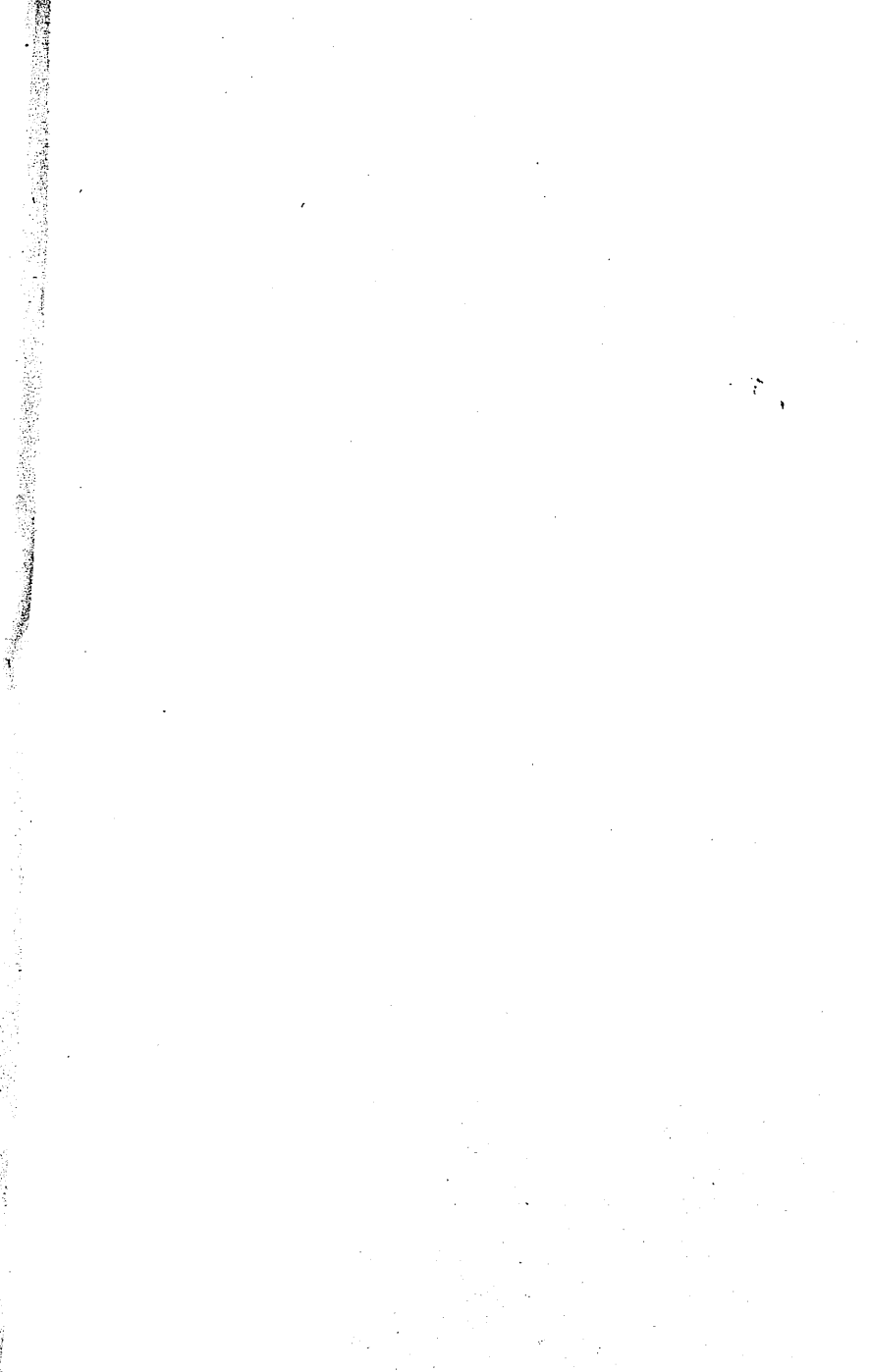


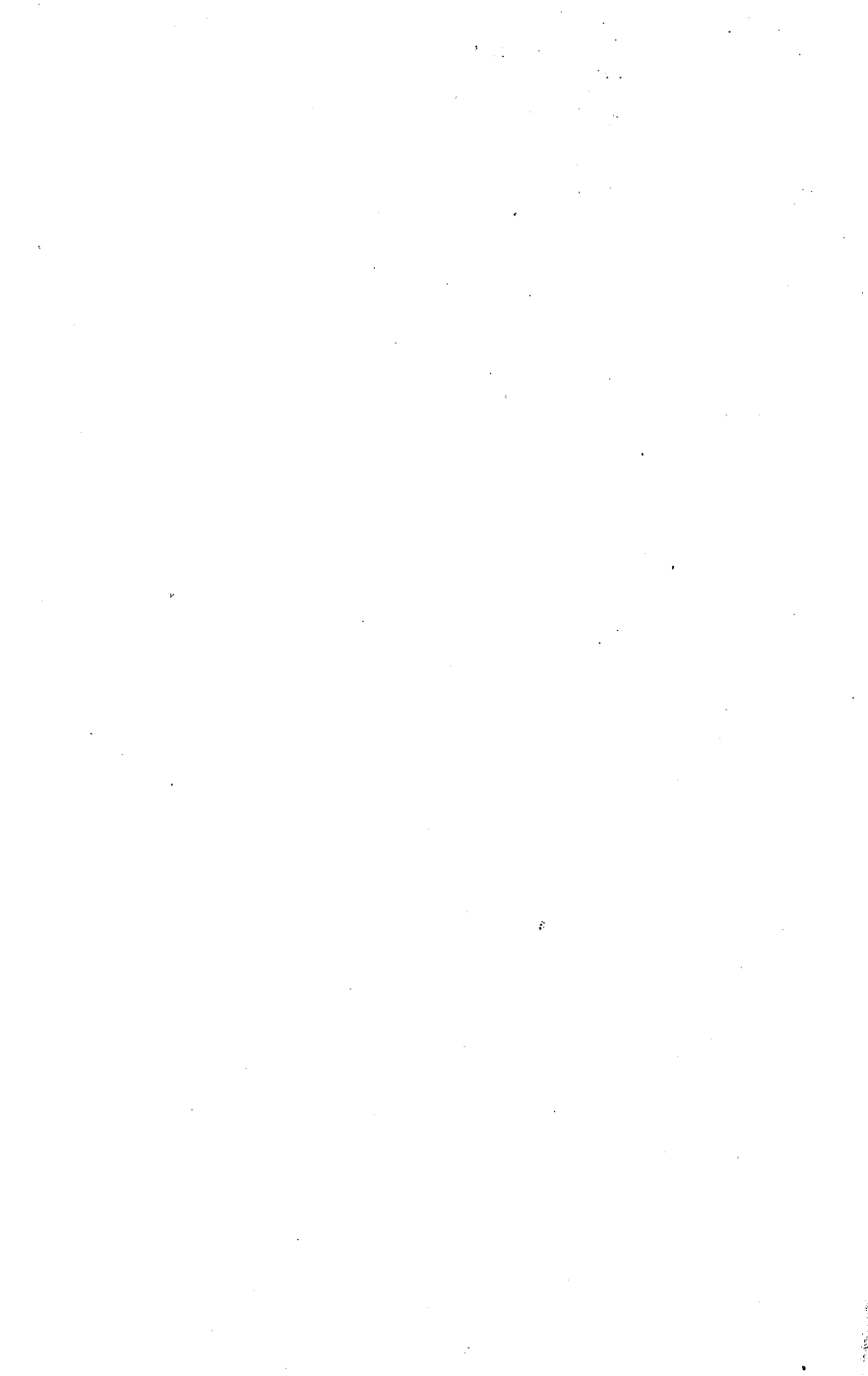
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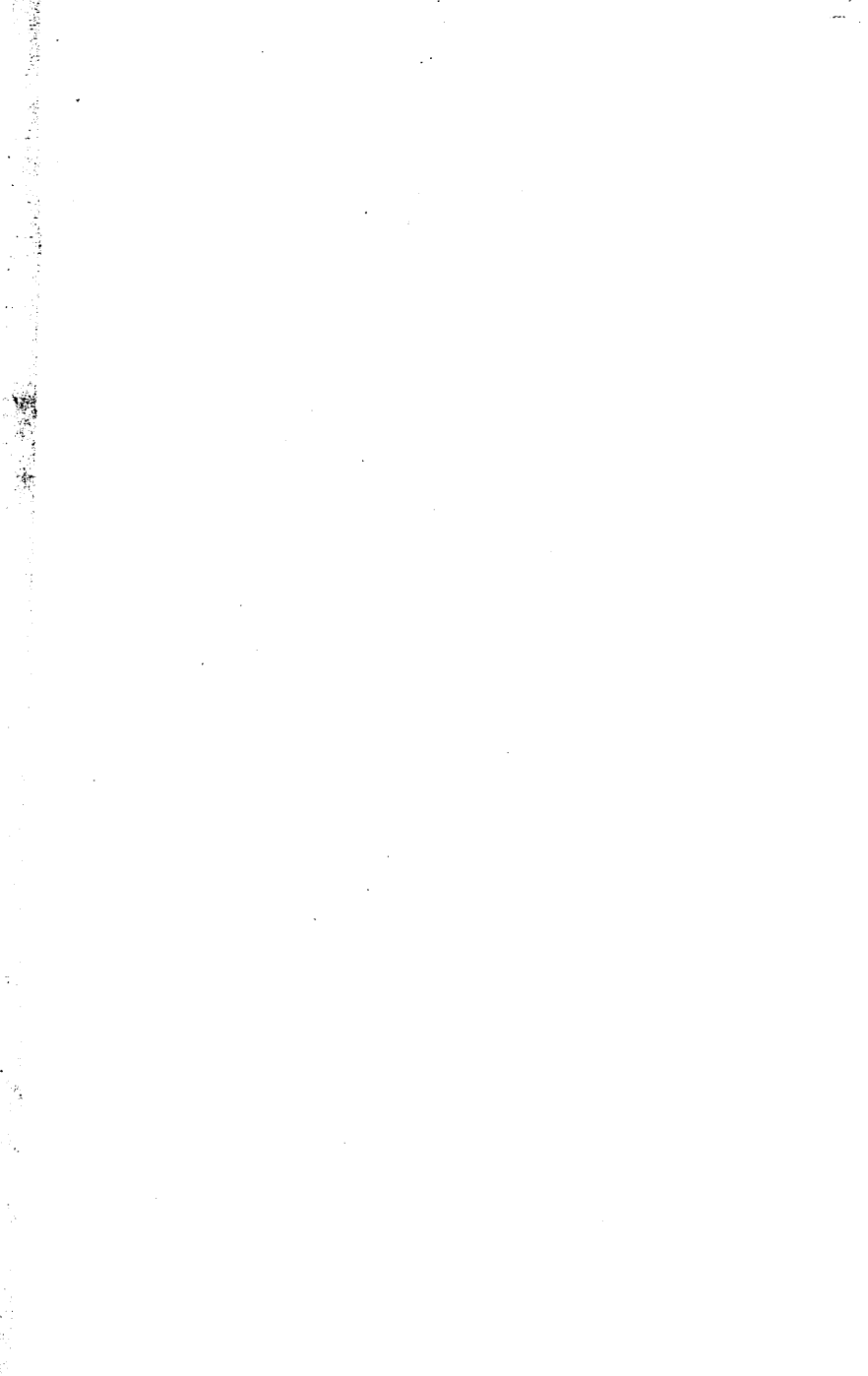
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THE

FATHERS OF THE DESERT;

OR, AN ACCOUNT OF

THE ORIGIN AND PRACTICE OF MONKERY

AMONG HEATHEN NATIONS;

ITS PASSAGE INTO THE CHURCH; AND SOME WONDERFUL
STORIES OF THE FATHERS CONCERNING THE
PRIMITIVE MONKS AND HERMITS.

BY HENRY RUFFNER,

LATE PRESIDENT OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE, VIRGINIA.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### SAINT PAUL THE SIMPLE.

[Translated from Tillemont's *Memoirs of Ecclesiastical History*.]

The author compiled this life of Paul the Simple from Sozomen, Paulinus' *Historia Lausaica*, Rufinus, &c. We have somewhat abbreviated it in the translation.

ONE of the most illustrious of St. Antony's disciples was Paul, surnamed the Simple by all the solitaries, because he was by nature extremely simple and free from malice. In the life of St. Thais he is called the oldest disciple of St. Antony. Palladius, who gives the fullest account of him, learned his history from the mouths of Hierax and Cronus, disciples of St. Antony, and from other ancient solitaries.

He was a laboring peasant, with a wife and children, and was already about sixty years of age when he embraced the solitary life. The occasion of his retreat from the world was extraordinary. His wife, who was as beautiful in person as she was deformed in soul, had long given herself up to an adulterer, without his knowing anything of the matter. But at last it so happened that he returned one day unexpectedly from the country, and coming suddenly into the house, by a particular providence of God, who designed his salvation, he surprised them in the commission of their crime. Then, with a smile mingled with indig-

nation, he said to them, Well, well, here is a pretty piece of work. I assure you, sir, that I care very little about it; and as for the woman, I call Christ to witness that I will have nothing more to do with her. Here, take both the wife and the children. For my part I am going to be a monk.

Straightway, without another word to anybody, he left the house, and with an afflicted mind betook himself to the desert, where, after having wandered about during eight days, without knowing whither he went, he arrived at the place where St. Antony dwelt—either by design, as Palladius and Sozomen thought, or accidentally, as Rufinus pretends, who adds that this meeting served to show him what he ought to do.

However this may be, he knocked at St. Antony's door, and told him of his resolution to become a monk. Palladius gives a long account of the difficulties that St. Antony made about receiving him, and the extreme rudeness with which he treated him during several days. By this treatment he meant not merely to prove his obedience and his patience, but to compel him either to retire into some religious community,\* or to gain his living in a village, rather than undertake to live in the desert, of which he thought him to be incapable, on account of his age. Paul went through all these trials with the virtue, not of a novice, but of a perfect monk. He never got out of humor, but uniformly exhibited a sweetness and a patience the more surprising because it was not to be expected of an old man, and one who had no experience in this sort of life. In effect, when the great Antony saw that he had exactly and courageously practiced all the austerities of which he set him the example (for on this occasion he made them more severe than ever), and observed the simplicity of his mind, he said to him at last, My brother, if you can live all your days as you have done these days past, I am very willing that you shall live with me. Paul answered, I know not whether you

\* That is some monastery of Cenobites. But none such then existed, if Paul was one of Antony's earliest disciples, as above related.—*Translator.*

have anything harder for me to do, but as to those things which you have shown me up to this time, I have no trouble in practising them. Then said the saint, Behold now, you have become a monk in the name of the Lord.

He failed not to instruct him fully in all the exercises of the monastic life. He showed him how he ought to sweeten the pains of solitude by manual labor, occupying his fingers with some terrestrial matter, while he lifted his thoughts and desires to God. He ordered him also to eat only in the evening, and then never fully to satisfy his appetite, especially in drinking, assuring him that a great quantity of water does us no less harm by the images which it excites in the mind, than wine does in exciting the passions by heating the body.

St. Antony wishing to fortify him still more in obedience, commanded him sometimes to do things that were both unreasonable and contrary to usage, in order to try how far his mind was disposed to go in this virtue. Once he ordered him to draw water for a whole day out of a well, and to pour it uselessly upon the ground; another time to take a basket to pieces and make it up again; then to rip his garment and sew it up again, and then to rip it again. Once when somebody brought them an earthen pot full of honey, he commanded Paul to break the pot and let the honey run to waste; and then he set him to gathering it up again with a shell, cautioning him at the same time not to take up any dirt with it. They say that he exercised him in this manner, to teach him to obey orders implicitly without question or objection, however unreasonable they might appear. Having thus trained him to absolute obedience, he recommended him to the other disciples as a perfect pattern of monastic virtue.

Some monks, who were great men, and of high attainments, came one day to visit St. Antony when Paul was present. They entered upon high and mysterious discourse concerning the prophets and the Saviour; whereupon Paul, with his usual simplicity, asked which came first into the world, the Saviour or the prophets. Antony blushed for his disciple's ignorance, and gave him the sign

which he usually employed to let him know that he should go away and hold his tongue. Being accustomed to obey every nod of the saint, as if it were a divine command, Paul retired to his cell, and held his tongue accordingly, being resolved not to say another word until ordered to speak. St. Antony perceiving that he went beyond the intention of the command to keep silence, asked him why he did not say any thing. He answered, My father, it is because you bade me go and hold my tongue. St. Antony, astonished at his going farther than was required in his obedience, said to the other fathers, Verily, he condemns us all; for we do not duly attend to the voice of God that speaks from heaven, whilst he, as you have seen, obeys the slightest word that proceeds from my mouth.

St. Antony, being fully assured of the perfection and sincerity of Paul in the practice of virtue, and having fully instructed him in his duties, built him, by divine suggestion, a cell three or four miles from his own, to which he sent him to practice what he had learned, saying, Go now and dwell alone, that you may learn *to fight against the demons*; for the combats which we have continually to wage in solitude oblige us to pray incessantly, which is a great point to be gained in striving after perfection. Thus in sending him into solitude, Antony testified his high opinion of Paul's attainments, esteeming him already qualified as a perfect saint, to do without a master. He often visited him in his retreat, and was highly pleased to find him always employed in doing what he had been ordered to do.

St. Paul had scarcely passed a year in his retreat, practising exactly the rules of virtue, before God confirmed St. Antony's esteem for him, and recompensed his simple-hearted obedience by giving him a mighty power of grace to drive away demons and heal the sick—even when they had incurable maladies. Hence he soon became celebrated as a worker of miracles, insomuch that he performed more and mightier works than St. Antony himself—so far, at least, as concerned the tormenting and driving away of demons.

The consequence was, that multitudes came to him from all quarters to be healed. St. Antony, fearing lest the annoyance to which he was subjected from this cause should make him fly to some other place, directed him to retreat into the depth of the desert, where it was difficult to reach him: so that Antony, who was more accessible, received those who came, and sent only those whom he could not himself cure to St. Paul, who never failed to cure them.

One day they brought to blessed Antony a young man, possessed by one of the most powerful and wicked demons, furious beyond expression, even pouring out blasphemies against heaven, and so enraged as to tear like a dog all who approached him. When the great Antony looked at him, he said to those who had brought him, It is not in my power to heal him, for I have not received the grace to command the highest order of demons, of which this is one; but Paul the Simple has the necessary grace. So saying, he went with them to find Paul, and said to him, Father Paul, you must drive the demon a little out of this man, and heal him, so that he may return home and glorify the Lord. But do you, my father, drive him out, said Paul. I have not leisure, said Antony; I have other matters to attend to. So he left the demoniac in Paul's hands, and returned to his cell.

The truly simple old man then rose, and having addressed an ardent and effectual prayer to God, he called the possessed, and said to the demon, Father Antony commands you to go out of this man, that when he is well, he may glorify the Lord. The demon answered insultingly, I shall not go out so, you poor beggar man. Paul then took his sheepskin and laid it over the shoulders of the demoniac, and said again to the demon, Now go, will you? since Father Antony says so. Whereupon the demon began to abuse St. Antony as well as Paul. Who then, said he, are these gluttons, these lazy fellows, these folks that are never satisfied? Why are you not content to be masters in your own houses? What business have you with us? Must you stretch your tyranny over us also? You shall go out for all that,

said Paul ; or I will go and tell Jesus Christ ; yes, I give you my word for it, before Jesus Christ, if you do not get out of this man, I will go straightway and complain to Jesus Christ ; and, depend upon it, he will treat you as you deserve. The demon had still the insolence to blaspheme even against Christ, crying that he would not go out for all that.

Then Paul got angry with this impious demon, and going out of his cell at noonday, he exposed himself to the burning rays of the sun, which in Egypt, especially in those parts, are so excessively hot, that they are scarcely inferior to the flames of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. This true pillar of heaven then continued standing in prayer on a rock of the mountain, as insensible to all the fires of the sun, as if he had been a pillar of stone. And seeing that, so far, his prayers had been unavailing, he said, like a vexed child, in his extreme and simple-hearted confidence in God :—Jesus Christ, you who were crucified under Pontius Pilate, I declare to you that I will not leave this rock, nor eat nor drink this day, but will starve here on this spot, if you do not listen to me this hour, and drive away that demon out of the man, that he may be delivered of his tormentor.

Immediately, *as if God were afraid of vexing a man whom he tenderly loved*, this simple, pure, and humble man had not ceased speaking, before the demon was heard crying in the saint's cell, where the demoniac had been left ;—I am going, I am going, I am going : I am driven away by force ; I quit this man, and I will never approach him again. Paul's humility and simplicity compel me to fly, and I know not where to go. He went out that instant, and *took the figure of a dragon, seventy cubits long, crawling away towards the Red Sea.\**

\* Antony's place of abode at this period of his life was by a mountain not far from the Red Sea. This passage shows that the Red Sea was as early at least as the fourth century the peculiar abode of demons. The notion on this subject, so long current among the the superstitious, originated probably from the Mosaic account of the drowning of Pharaoh and his host.

Behold,—exclaims Palladius (who relates the story)—what wonders were wrought by this man, so humble! But he performed many others still more astonishing. But what they were this Father of the Church does not tell us.

This saint had also the special grace, as Rufinus assures us, of being able, on looking at those who entered the church, to tell, just as clearly as others could tell the features by looking at the face, what the disposition and thoughts were of those who came into the church. He saw also their angels,\* (says the same Father Rufinus.) He related himself the following story. Having come one day into a monastery to visit and instruct the brethren; after they had as usual comforted one another, they went to the church to celebrate the Sacrament. Then considering those who entered, he saw them all, with his spiritual eyes, wearing bright faces, with hearts full of joy, and their angels testifying gladness on account of their good disposition. But he saw one whose body was all black and covered with a dusky cloud, while demons on either hand were pulling him by a bridle in his nose. His guardian angel (poor fellow!) followed at a distance, all sad and downcast.

At this sight Paul began to weep bitterly, out of grief for the miserable man, and remained outside of the church, smiting his breast. The other old men, unable to conjecture the cause of his grief, feared that they had committed some fault, which God had discovered to him. They prayed him therefore not to conceal from them what the matter was, or if they were mistaken in their conjecture, that he would go in with them to the sacrament. But he would neither go in nor tell them. He continued outside, prostrate upon the ground, weeping for the wretch's misery.

When church was over and the brethren came out, he looked to see if any change had taken place. Then he who had appeared in so deplorable a state, came forth with a joyful face, and his body white; the demons had fallen back, and his angel was now

\* In those days, the old Egyptian doctrine of guardian angels prevailed in the Church, as it had before prevailed among the Jews.—*Translator.*



by his side in a rejoicing mood. Then Paul rose up delighted, and blessing God, he cried out, Oh, unspeakable goodness and mercy of our God! How infinite is his compassion! How boundless his love! Then he ran, and mounting a high place, he cried out, Come behold the works of the Lord. Come behold how he will have all men to be saved. Come worship the Lord; fall down before him and say, Thou alone canst forgive sins!

The people having run to know what the matter was, he reported what the Lord had shown him, and prayed the man in whom he had seen such a change, to tell him what was the cause, and what his thoughts and actions were. Then this man, unable to deny the truth, spoke out and said that he had been; until then, involved in the sin of fornication; but that having entered the church, and heard read that passage of Isaiah where God promises to pardon those who turn truly to him, I felt myself deeply touched, said he; I reflected on my conduct and prayed to Jesus Christ that he would show in me the mercy spoken of by the prophet. I promised to renounce my sins, and especially that of which I had been most guilty, and to serve the Lord, from that time, with a pure conscience. Now, said I, receive, O Lord, a sinner who repents, who worships thee, who begs thy pardon and renounces absolutely his sin.\* Then all the bystanders rendered thanks to God with a loud voice for his mercy, and concluded that no sinner needs despair of his salvation, since God so mercifully receives those who return to him, and purges their past sins, through repentance.

A certain monk, named Paphnutius, had converted a celebrated courtesan named Thais. At the end of three years, during which he had kept her shut up as a penitent, he went to find St. Antony, to know whether God had forgiven her sins. On his arrival, he related in detail the marvellous history of Thais.

\* The reader will observe that in the penitential exercises of the monks, they never mention the merit of Christ's atonement as the ground of pardon. They expect it of God's mercy, through the merit of their repentance.

Antony assembled his disciples, and ordered them to pass the night separately in prayer, to see whether God would not reveal to some one what Paphnutius desired to know. Then Paul, one of these disciples, prayed by himself without ceasing, until he saw in heaven a superb bed, guarded by three virgins, whose faces were resplendent with light. Whereupon he cried out, So fine a lodging can be intended only for my father Antony. But he heard a voice saying, It is not for your father Antony; it is for Thais the courtesan.\* Paul having reported this vision, Paphnutius knew that God was satisfied with the repentance of Thais, who shortly afterwards rested in peace. She is honored by the Church on the 8th of October, as one of the holiest and most illustrious penitents.

It is not known when Paul the Simple died. Palladius, who wrote the fullest account of him about the year 392, had seen St. Antony in his youth. Paul lived in the days of the Emperor Constantine, sixty or seventy years earlier.

\* Thais was the name of a celebrated Greek courtesan in the time of Alexander the Great. This story of St. Thais, the courtesan, seems to be made up out of two historical characters: St. Mary Magdalene, the *penitent* courtesan, and the famous Thaïs, the *impenitent* courtesan, who conquered Alexander the Conqueror.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL OF EGYPT.

#### THE FIRST HERMIT.

Translated from the Latin of St. Jerome, with Notes by the Translator.

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#### *The Prologue.*

1. THERE has been much difference of opinion respecting the first monk who took up his abode in a desert. Some would go as far back as Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, for the origin of this sort of monachism. But Elijah was more than a monk, and John began to prophesy before he was born, Luke i. 41. The common opinion is that Antony introduced this mode of life, and it is true that he was in one sense the first hermit: but it is not true that all other hermits were led by his example. Amathas and Macarius, disciples of Antony, affirm that one Paul of Thebes in upper Egypt, was the first who lived a religious life in a desert, though not the originator of the name *hermit*, afterwards given to those who led this sort of life. Some incredible stories have been circulated respecting him, which are not worthy to be repeated.\* My purpose is—since the life of St. Antony has been fully written by another hand—to give some account of this Paul; of whose youth and whose death we have some knowledge; but of whose experience during the intermediate years of his solitary life in the desert, nothing has been discovered to any mortal man.

\* When we consider what Jerome has told as credible, we scarcely know what monkish story he would deem incredible.

## THE LIFE OF PAUL.

2. In the reign of the persecuting emperors, Decius and Valerian, when Cornelius, bishop of Rome, and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, suffered martyrdom, the storm of persecution laid waste many churches of Egypt and the Thebaid. Christians then prayed to be killed with the sword for the name of Christ; but the cunning enemy sought lingering torments for them, and aimed to kill the soul rather than the body. As Cyprian says, it was not permitted those who desired it, to die. We present the reader with two memorable examples of this sort of cruelty.

3. One of these martyrs who continued faithful under the tortures of the rack, and of red-hot iron plates applied to his body, was then besmeared all over with honey, and thus laid in the hot sunshine with his hands tied behind him, that he might, after he had overcome the fiery ordeal, be subdued by the bites and stings of insects.

The other who was in the flower of youth was led into a delightful garden, where, among white lilies and blushing roses, under the sound of a murmuring rivulet, and of leaves rustling in the breeze, he was laid with his face upwards on a downy bed, gently, yet securely, fastened with a network of soft twine, and so left by the men who placed him there. Then came a beautiful girl of loose morals, who, with the most seductive blandishments, endeavored to win him to a violation of chastity. The young man, in spite of himself, felt the movings of nature: but his will was resolute against the temptation. But what could he do when both hands and feet were bound fast? He resorted to the only remedy that was left him: he bit off his tongue, and spit it into the fair tempter's face. The pain that followed released him from the carnal excitement, and saved his chastity.

4. At the time when such things were done in the lower Thebaid, Paul, at the age of sixteen years, was, by the death of his

parents, left in the world with an only sister already married, and with a rich inheritance. He had been well instructed in both Greek and Egyptian literature. His temper was mild, and his love of God remarkable. When the thunder of persecution sounded in his ears, he retired into a remote village out of the way. But what will not the accursed thirst for gold impel men to commit? The sister's husband became inclined to betray him, when he ought to have been his protector. Neither the tears of the wife, nor the tie of kindred, nor the fear of an all-seeing God, could dissuade him from his intended treachery.

5. The prudent youth, when he perceived his danger, fled to the desert mountains, where, converting necessity into choice, while he waited for the end of the persecution, he travelled on by short stages, stopping occasionally, and then advancing; until at length he found a rocky mountain, and at the foot of it a moderately-sized cave, that had its entrance closed with a stone. With a natural curiosity to see what was inside, he removed the stone, and, on entering, discovered a large vestibule open at top, but shaded by the spreading branches of an old palm-tree; and at the foot of the tree a spring of pure water, which passed out of the cave through a small hole, and was lost in the sands outside. In this cavernous mountain there were also numerous habitations, in which rusty anvils and hammers were seen. These had been used for coining money. Here, as Egyptian records attest, lawless money-coiners had carried on their trade at the time of Queen Cleopatra's connection with Mark Antony, the Roman chief.

6. He took a fancy to this abode, as the gift of God, and here he led a life of prayer and solitude. The palm-tree supplied him with both food and clothing. Lest this should seem incredible, I call Christ and his holy angels to witness, that on the border of the Syrian desert, next to the Saracens, I have seen a monk who lived shut up in a cell during thirty years, on barley bread and pure water; and another monk, whose dwelling was an old cistern, and his only food five dried figs daily. Therefore the case of our

Paul will appear incredible to those only who do not believe that all things are possible to the faithful.

7. But to return to our subject: when now the blessed Paul had reached the one hundred and thirteenth year of his heavenly life on earth, and Antony had attained his ninetieth year in another desert, the thought came into his mind (as he used to say himself); that no monk as perfect as himself had yet settled in the desert. But one night it was revealed to him that there was in the desert beyond him another monk who was far better than himself, and whom he ought to visit. Therefore, at the break of day, the venerable old man, supporting his feeble limbs with a staff, set off to go, he knew not whither. At noon, when the sun grew intensely hot, he would not stop nor turn aside for a shelter, saying, I trust in God that he will at some time show me that fellow-servant whom he hath promised me. He had no sooner spoken these words, than he saw a creature, half man, half horse, which the poets have named *hippocentaur*. At the sight of this strange object he armed himself, by making the sign of the cross on his forehead, and then called out, "Ho, you! where does this servant of God dwell?" The monster, braying forth I know not what barbarous jargon, and breathing rather than uttering his words, through a mouth shaggy with hair, endeavored to use gentleness in his address. Then, stretching forth his right hand, he pointed out the way: then, skimming the open plains in his bird-like flight, he vanished from the eyes of the wondering old man. We pretend not to know whether the devil had assumed this form to frighten him, or whether the desert produces this also among the monstrous animals of which it is fruitful.

8. Antony proceeded on his way, thinking with amazement on what he had seen. Not long afterwards, in a rocky ravine, he saw a sort of mannikin, with a hooked nose, rough, crooked horns on his forehead, and his body terminating below in goat's feet. At this sight, Antony, like a brave warrior, took the shield of faith and breast-plate of hope. But the animal aforesaid, instead of battle, offered him palm-nuts for provision, as a pledge of peace.

Antony hasted up, and inquired who he might be. The answer was, "I am a mortal—one of the inhabitants of the desert, whom the pagans, deluded with manifold error, worship, under the name of Fauns, Satyrs, and Incubi. I come as an ambassador for my herd, to beseech that you would pray on our behalf to our common Lord, who, we know, came long ago to save the world, for his sound hath gone through all the earth."

While the Satyr thus spoke, the aged traveller watered his face abundantly with tears, which his great joy poured forth in evidence of his feelings. For he rejoiced at the glory of Christ and the destruction of Satan, and admired, at the same time, that he could understand this creature's speech. Then he struck his staff on the ground, saying, "Woe to thee, Alexandria! who worshippest monsters instead of God. Woe to thee, harlot city! into which all the demons of the earth have collected themselves. What wilt thou say now? Beasts profess Christ, and thou worshippest monsters for God." Before he had done speaking the leaping animal flew away, as if it were borne by wings.

Let no one scruple to believe this. The narrative is confirmed by a fact which, in the reign of Constantine, all the world witnessed. At Alexandria, a living man of this sort was brought and exhibited as a show to the people; and afterwards, the dead body was preserved in salt and brought to Antioch, that the emperor might see it.\*

\* If an ourang outang or some such animal was exhibited in Alexandria, that is no proof that St. Antony conversed with a hippocentaur and a satyr in the desert. If there be any foundation for this story about St. Antony, we may suppose that the superstitious old monk was frightened at meeting with a wild ass in the desert plain, and an ibex or rock-goat in the rocky ravine. How much of the fables added to the facts may have originated with himself, and how much with his disciples, we need not inquire. St. Jerome may have added a little himself for the glory of monkery. But he was not the only one of the fathers that believed in the existence of Fauns, Satyrs, &c. St. Augustine and the rest were equally credulous. But in their time, as no animals of the sort appeared in the inhabited parts of the world, the lingering credulity of the age assigned the unexplored deserts as the place of their habitation.

9. But to proceed with our subject: Antony went on through the region that he had entered, seeing only the traces of wild beasts and the extensive waste of the desert. He knew not what to do, or which way to turn. Now another day had passe. For one day more he could trust that Christ had not forsaken him. He spent the dark hours of the second night in prayer. At the first glimmer of the dawn he espied, not far off, a she-wolf, panting with thirst, creep into a hole at the foot of a mountain. He kept his eye on the place, and, drawing near the hole where the beast had disappeared, he looked in, but could see nothing on account of the darkness. But as the Scripture saith, *perfect love casteth out fear*, he stopped until he recovered breath; then, like a skilful explorer, he entered and advanced slowly, often stopping to catch any sound that might reach him. At last, through the fearful darkness, he saw a distant light. Now quickening his pace, he stumbled over a stone and made some noise. Blessed Paul, who was within, shut the open door as soon as he heard the sound, and barred it fast. Antony fell down before the door, and for more than an hour sued for admittance, saying, "You know who I am, and whence and wherefore I have come. I know that I am unworthy to see you; but I will not go away before I do see you. Why do you receive beasts and reject men?\*" I have sought and found you. I knock that it may be opened unto me. If I cannot obtain this, I will die here before your door-posts. Surely you will then vouchsafe to bury my dead body."

"No one asks in this style with a hostile intent; no one thus pours forth tears that he may betray. Do you wonder that I receive you not, when you come to die?" So saying, Paul opened the door with a smiling face; and with affectionate embraces they saluted each other by name, and united in thanksgiving to God.

10. Paul, after giving Antony a holy kiss, sat down with him and thus began a conversation: "You see how uncombed, hoary

\* A very pertinent question. But it was common for the monks of these early ages to make beasts their companions, and to shun the sight of their fellow-men.



hairs cover the head of him whom you have sought with so much labor. You see a man who will soon turn to dust. But since charity sustains all things, tell me, I beseech you, how fares it with the human race? Do new houses rise in ancient cities? By whom is the world governed? Are any left who are still carried away with the error of demons?"\* While talking of these matters, they saw a large raven light on a branch of the palm-tree, and then gently flying down, deposit a whole loaf of bread before their faces, while they were looking on with wonder. After the bird left them, "Heigh!" said Paul, "the Lord, ever kind and merciful, hath sent us a dinner. It is now sixty years since I have daily received half a loaf, but since thou hast come, Christ hath doubled the supply for his soldiers."

11. Then, after thanksgiving to the Lord, they sat down by the glassy margin of the fountain. Here now a contention arose between them, on the question who should break the bread; and this was spun out nearly the whole day. Paul urged the custom of hospitality; Antony pled his friend's right as the elder. At length they concluded that each should lay hold on the side of the loaf next to him, and pull till it broke: whatever remained in his hand should be each one's portion.† After eating, they stooped down and drank a little water out of the fountain. Then they offered to God the sacrifice of praise, and spent the night in watchings.

When day returned, blessed Paul thus addressed Antony: "I have long known, brother, of thy residence in these regions. God promised me long since that thou shouldst be my fellow servant. But because now the time of my departure is at hand, and I have long desired to be dissolved and be with Christ, and, my race

\* Paul had now been upwards of ninety years shut up in the desert, with his head uncombed and his body covered with a rough mat of plaited fibres of the palm leaf. There is something strangely pathetic in his inquiries, when at last he saw a fellow-being who could bring him intelligence from the world. "The error of demons" was idolatry.

† This ridiculous scene of monkish etiquette may have a moral signification. A trifle induced the old men to defer their dinner.

being run, to receive the crown of righteousness ; thou hast been sent by the Lord to cover my poor body in the ground, and render dust to dust."

12. Antony, on hearing these things, entreated him with tears and groans not to leave him, but to take him as a companion of the journey. "You ought (said Paul) not to seek your own things, but those of others. For yourself it is expedient to lay down the burden of the flesh, and to follow the lamb ; but for the other brethren it is expedient that you instruct them by your example. Wherefore, I beseech you, go—if it be not too much trouble—and fetch the cloak which Athanasius the bishop gave you, that you may wrap my poor corpse in it." Blessed Paul made this request, not because he cared much whether his body should putrefy with or without a cover, seeing how long a time he was content to clothe himself with plaited palm-leaves ; but that absence might alleviate his friend's sorrow for his death.

Antony was astonished to find that he had heard of Athanasius and his cloak. And now, as if he saw Christ in Paul, and venerating God who dwelt in his breast, he durst not answer another word. But weeping in silence he kissed the old man's eyes and hands, and returned to his monastery.\* His steps did not keep pace with the eagerness of his mind ; for although his body was broken with years of fasting, yet his spirit was not enfeebled by old age.

13. At length, fatigued and out of breath, he ended his journey at his own dwelling. Here two disciples, who had long ministered to him, ran to meet him, and inquired, "Father, where have you been this long time?" He answered, "Woe is me, a sinner, who have falsely pretended to be a monk. I have seen Elijah and John in the desert. I have seen St. Paul in paradise." Then closing his lips, he carried the cloak out of the cell. His disciples asking him to tell them what the matter was, he only said, "There is a time to be silent and a time to speak."

\* The term monastery originally signified any abode of a monk or monks. Now it denotes a building for a society of monks.

14. Then he went forth ; and taking not a morsel of food, thirsty and longing to see *him*, and with eyes and heart embracing him ; for he was afraid—and so it turned out—that in his absence the blessed man should render up his soul to Christ. At daylight on the second morning, when three hours' journey remained, he saw, amidst bands of angels and prophets, Paul ascending on high, and shining in a snow-white robe. Falling on his face in the sand, Antony said, weeping and wailing—“O, Paul, why did you send me away? Why depart without bidding me farewell? So lately known!—so soon gone!”

15. After this, Antony ran the rest of the way, or rather flew, with the speed of a bird ; nor without reason—for on entering the cave he saw the corpse, with head erect and hands uplifted. Thinking at first that the old man was still alive, he also betook himself to prayer ; but not hearing the usual sighs and groans of one in prayer, he threw his arms round him to give him a mournful kiss, and now perceived that even the corpse of the saint, in the attitude of devotion, prayed to God, to whom all live.

16. Then he wrapped up the body, and carried it forth—singing hymns also, and traditional psalms of the Christians,\* he was troubled that he had no spade with which he might dig a grave. Fluctuating with various thoughts, and considering that it would take him four days to fetch a spade from the monastery, he exclaimed, “I will die here, as is fit, by thy warrior, O Christ: I will fall down and breathe out my last breath.” While he revolved these thoughts in his mind, lo! two lions came running towards him, from the interior parts of the desert, with their manes flying over their necks. Antony shuddered at this sight; but soon committing his soul to God, he looked on them as if they were doves, and fearlessly waited their approach. They came straightway to the old man's body, and there stopped. Then wagging their tails, they lay down at his feet, moaning dismally ; so that one might understand them to be mourning to the

\* Hymnos quoque et psalmos de Christianâ traditione decantans: That is, hymns and psalms composed by Christians of former ages.

best of their ability. Then at a short distance they began to scratch up the ground, throwing out the sand emulously, until they had made a hole large enough to contain a man's body. Then forthwith, as if demanding their reward, with downcast heads and wagging ears, they went and licked Antony's hands and feet. He understood them to pray for his blessing. Without delay he broke forth into the praise of Christ, that dumb beasts should feel that there is a God—saying, "Lord, without whose will not a leaf falls to the ground, give them a blessing according to thy wisdom."\* Then with a motion of his hand, he commanded them to depart. When they were gone, he bent his aged shoulders under the holy corpse, laid it in the grave, and in the usual manner heaped up the sand over it. The next morning, that the heir might possess himself of the goods of the intestate, he claimed for himself the coat of the deceased. He had woven it for himself out of palm-leaves, by plaiting the fibres together, in the manner of basket-work. With this he returned to the monastery, and then gave his disciples a connected narrative of the whole affair. On the solemn days of Easter and Pentecost he never failed to clothe himself in Paul's palm-leaf coat.

17. And now at the conclusion, we would ask those who know not their true patrimony; who adorn their palaces with marbles, and string their country seats from farm to farm—what did this naked old man ever lack? You drink out of jeweled cups; he satisfied nature by dipping up water with the hollow of his hand. You wear gilded robes; he had not a garment which your meanest slave would wear. But on the other hand, this poor man had paradise for his portion; and hell will take you in—all gilded as you are. He, though naked, wore the robe of Christ—which you, dressed in silks, have cast off and lost. Paul, covered with vile dust, will rise to glory; you, enclosed in carved sepulchres of

\* We know not in what form the Divine blessing was to come upon these pious beasts of prey, unless in that of plenty of fat sheep, goats antelopes and wild asses.

stone, will be burnt with all your riches. Spare yourselves, I pray you ; spare, at least, the riches that you love. Why wrap dead bodies in gilded vestments ? Why cannot vain ambition be laid aside, even amidst tears and mourning ? Cannot the corpses of the wealthy rot without being dressed in silk ? \*

18. I beseech thee, whosoever thou art that readest these things, remember poor Jerome, the sinner ; who, if he might choose, would much rather take the rough coat of Paul with his merits, than the purple robe of kings with their punishments.

\* In this paragraph St. Jerome puts in striking contrast the two parties who run to opposite extremes in their plans of life : the one casting away and despising the temporal gifts of God, and the other greedily pursuing them, and consuming them upon their lusts. Too many in the present age, even among professed Christians, run towards the latter extreme. One of the most unseemly of all human vanities, is that which is here justly rebuked — the vanity of fashionable mourning, pompous funerals, and ornamented sepulchres. How constantly do we see, among the professed disciples of our humble Saviour, and in the house of mourning and the house of God, the newly-made widows and orphans and their friends, belieing their professions of grief, and betraying the vanity of their hearts, by their showy and costly habiliments of pretended woe, most carefully adjusted after the rules of fashion !

## CHAPTER XVII.

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### THE LIFE OF ST. HILARION, THE MONK.

BY ST. JEROME.

*Translated from the original Latin.*

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St. Hilarion, born about the year 297, died in the year 377 or 378, at the age of eighty.

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#### *The Prologue (abridged.)*

1. In commencing the life of St. Hilarion, I invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit that dwelt in him ; that he who gave him his virtues, may enable me to narrate them in a manner worthy of the subject. Though Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, who associated much with Hilarion, has written a laudatory epistle concerning him, and this is read by many ; yet it is one thing to praise the dead in general terms, and another to give a detailed account of their actions. Therefore in undertaking this work, more to his favor than his prejudice—as we only complete what he began—we hold in contempt the speeches of gainsayers, who formerly detracted from my Paul, and will now perhaps detract more from Hilarion. Having calumniated the former on account of his solitude, they will probably object to the numerous company that frequented the latter—as he who is always hidden passes for nobody, and he who is visited by many is held cheap. Their predecessors, the Pharisees, formerly did the same thing. Neither John Baptist's desert and fasting, nor the Lord's multitudes, meat-

and drinks, could please them. But I shall put my hand to the work, and turn a deaf ear as I proceed to the yelping of Scylla's puppies \*

#### THE LIFE OF HILARION.

2. Hilarion was born in Tabatha, a village near Gaza, in the south of Palestine. His parents being idolaters, he was like a rose borne by a thorn bush. They sent him to a grammar school in Alexandria, where, considering his tender age, he gave remarkable evidence of mental power and moral worth. He soon gained the love of all, and acquired skill in the art of speaking. What is more than all these, he believed in the Lord, and took no pleasure in the riots of the circus, the bloodshed of the gladiatorial shows, or in the luxurious scenes of the theatre. All his pleasures lay in the meetings of the church.

3. Hearing then the fame of Antony, which had spread through Egypt, he went to the desert with an eager desire to see him. When he saw him, he forthwith laid aside his ordinary dress, and staid with him nearly two months, contemplating the order of his life and the gravity of his manners—how often he prayed—how humbly he received the brethren—how severely he rebuked—how warmly he exhorted—how no weakness could break his continence or the harshness of his diet—and how unwillingly he bore the multitudes who flocked to him for relief from various afflictions and the assaults of demons, esteeming it unfit that he should endure in the desert the populousness of a city.

Thus Hilarion deemed it incumbent on himself to begin, as Antony had done, to strive like a brave soldier for the rewards of victory. He returned to his country with several monks; and his parents being now dead, he divided his property among his brothers and the poor. He reserved nothing for himself, fearing the example

\* The rumbling and splashing of the whirlpool of Scylla on the coast of Calabria, gave rise to the poetic fable that Scylla was a monster attended by barking dogs.

of Ananias and Sapphira, and remembering particularly the Lord's declaration, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 33.)

He was now fifteen years of age. Thus naked and armed in Christ, he entered the desert which begins on the sea coast, seven miles from Majoma, the port of Gaza, on the way to Egypt. As this place was bloody with robberies and murders, his neighbors warned him of danger; but he despised [temporal] death, that he might escape [eternal] death.

4. All admired his spirit and his appearance, all youthful, except that the ardor of his soul and the light of faith shone from his eyes. His cheeks were smooth, his body was slender and delicate, and seemed incapable of enduring hardships, or even slight severities of cold and heat. But covering his limbs only with sackcloth, a coat of skins which Antony had given him, and a coarse wrapper, he enjoyed the vast solitude between the sea and a marsh, eating only fifteen dried figs after sunset. Because the region was infested with robbers, he never lodged twice in the same place. What then could the devil do? Whither could he turn himself? He saw himself conquered and trodden under foot by a boy, who was not yet old enough to commit sin.\*

5. He therefore tickled his senses, and on the boy's attaining the age of puberty, suggested to him the usual incentives to pleasure. Christ's young novice had to think of what he had never experienced, and to imagine what he had never seen or felt. Then angry with himself, he beat his breast with his fist, as if he would drive away such thoughts by buffeting. "Ah! (said he) my ass,† I will keep you from kicking. I will not feed you with barley but with chaff. I will famish you, and load you, and drive you through heat and cold, that you may think of food rather than wantonness." Therefore, after three or four day's fasting, he sustained his failing life with some juice of herbs

\* Jerome does not mean sin in general, but *the* sin of unchastity, which in monkish estimation is of all sins the worst and the hardest to avoid.

† The body, so called in contempt.



and a few dried figs ; often praying meanwhile, and singing psalms and digging the ground with a fork, that work might double the effect of fasting. At the same time he plaited baskets out of rushes, thus emulating the discipline of the Egyptian monks, and conforming to the apostolic rule, " He that will not work should not eat," (2 Thess. iii. 10.) So attenuated did he thus become, so wasted was his body, that his bones scarcely hung together.

6. On a certain night he began to hear the crying of young children, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of kine, a wailing as of women in distress, the roaring of lions, the murmur of an army, and other strange noises,\* that he might fly in terror from the sound before he saw anything. He knew the tricks of demons, and so falling upon his knees, he made the sign of the cross upon his forehead. Thus armed, he lay and fought more courageously, desiring sometimes to see what he shuddered to hear, and looking about on every side with anxious eyes. Presently he discerned, all of a sudden, in the moonlight, a coach rushing up to him with glowing wheels : but when he called aloud upon Jesus, he beheld the earth suddenly open, and all this frightful show swallowed up in a moment. Then he said, *Tho horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea ; and, Some trust in chariots, some in horses ; but we will be magnified in the name of our God* (Exod. xv. 1 and Ps. xx. 7.)

Many were his temptations, and daily and nightly did the demons try their various arts upon him ; to relate them all would require more than a volume. How often did *women appear naked*

\* When he had reduced his hated enemy, the body, to a skeleton, and thus weakened his understanding and inflamed his imagination, then he was prepared for apparitions. In the midst of a fearful solitude, alone, unprotected, occupied with dreamy contemplations, and filled with the conception that the air and the dry desert were haunted by malignant spirits, conspiring to drive him from his holy exercises, would not the poor enthusiast's fancy convert every sound into a demoniacal apparition ? The murmuring waves of the sea shore, the croaking of frogs in the marsh, the chattering of wild fowl, and even the whisper of passing breezes, would all be the voices of demons to his listening ear.

*before him as he lay !*\* How often luxurious feasts, when he was hungry ! Sometimes when he was at prayer, a howling wolf or a barking fox sprang past him ; and when he was singing, a show of fighting gladiators was presented to him. One of the gladiators seemed to be slain, and falling at his feet demanded sepulture.†

8. Once on a time he was praying with his head to the ground, and, as human nature inclines to do, his mind was drawn away from prayer into some other train of thought, when the driver leaped upon his back, beating his sides with spurs and his neck with a whip, saying, “ Ho ! why do you nod ? ” at the same time laughing aloud ; and when he had given up, inquiring whether he would have barley.

9. From his sixteenth to his twentieth year, he sheltered himself against heat and rain by a little hut, which he had covered with rushes and sedge grass. Afterwards he built himself a little cell, five feet high (less than his own stature), and of somewhat greater length. This cell, which yet remains, received his body more like a tomb than a habitation.

10. He shorn his hair once a year at Easter. He lodged on the ground strewn with rushes, and so continued to do until the day of his death. He never washed his sackcloth shirt that he once put on, saying that it was useless to aim at cleanliness in sackcloth.‡ Nor did he change his coat until it had completely fallen off in rags. After prayers and psalms, he usually recited the Holy Scriptures that he retained in memory. To avoid

\* Naked women were apt to haunt the imagination of these lonely wrestlers against nature. Antony saw them also.

† Some of our readers may need to be informed, that a favorite amusement of the Romans was to see wretched gladiators, or swordsmen, fight and kill one another in their theatres. These unfortunate creatures were mostly slaves and prisoners of war, who were thus sacrificed to amuse a cruel and bloody-minded people.

‡ When we first saw the statement that Hilarion trimmed his hair once a year, we hoped to find a monk who paid some regard to cleanliness ; but no ; Christian monkery and nastiness seem to be inseparable. Hilarion was about as holy and as dirty as Antony.

repetitions and disjointed notices of his manner of life, I will at once present a sketch of his ascent towards perfection, and then resume the general history in the order of events.

11. From the twentieth to the twenty-seventh year of his age, he fed daily during three years on three gills of lentils soaked in cold water ; and during three other years, he ate dry bread with salt and water. Again from his twenty-seventh to his thirtieth year, he sustained himself on wild herbs and raw roots of certain shrubs. Then, to his thirty-fifth year, he had for his daily food, six ounces of barley bread and a little salad cooked without oil. But perceiving his eyes grow dim under this regimen, and his whole body covered with tetter and dry scab, he added some oil to his former allowance. Up to his sixty-third year, he pursued this degree of abstinence ; never tasting anything besides his stated allowance, either fruit, pulse, or anything else. Then, when he saw his body enfeebled, and supposed that death was near, he abstained from bread with incredible fervor of spirit, up to his eightieth year : so that at the period of life when most men live more indulgently, he came, as it were, new to the service of the Lord.\* A little soup was also made for him of meat and vegetables cut small ; the meat and drink together weighing scarce five ounces. And so, fulfilling the order of his life, he never broke his fast before sunset, neither on feast days nor even in the worst sickness.

12. While he yet inhabited his little hut, when he was eighteen years old, thieves came upon him by night, either because they supposed he might have something worth carrying away ; or thinking that they would appear contemptible, if the youth, alone as he was, did not fear their attacks. After they had run about nearly all night, between the sea and the marsh, in search of his lodging place, they at last discovered it by the clear moonlight ; and as if in jest, they asked Hilarion what he would do if robbers should come upon him. He answered, “ The naked do

\* Yes, that is a leading principle of monkery ; voluntary starvation is doing God service. But what doth it profit ?

not fear robbers." But you might be killed," said they. "So I might, so I might, (said he) ; but neither do I fear death, because I am prepared to die." Then these robbers, admiring his firmness and faith, confessed how they had wandered about in search of him, and their eyes had been blinded ; but they promised to lead better lives for the future.

13. He had now been twenty-two years in the desert, known to none except by report,\* though his fame had spread through all Palestine. Now a certain woman of Eleutheropolis [near Hebron], perceiving that her husband despised her on account of her barrenness (for she had lived fifteen years with him and had borne no child), was the first who dared to break in upon the solitude of the blessed Hilarion. When he was expecting no such thing, she suddenly appeared, and dropping on her knees before him, she said, "Pardon my boldness and my necessity. Why do you turn away your eyes ? Why shun a suppliant ? Look not on a woman except in her distress. My sex bore the Saviour. The whole need not a physician, but the sick." At last she ceased ; and he, looking on a woman after so long a time, inquired what distress had brought her to him. When she had told him, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and bade her have confidence. He followed her with tears as she departed, and a year afterwards, he saw her with a son. †

14. This, the first of his miracles made another of them more notable. Aristenete, wife of Elpidius, who was afterwards præ-

\* Whose report ? The biographers of these hermits omit to mention facts, which however leak out through circumstances which they mention. Hilarion long had supplies of food which others must have brought him, and he made baskets which he must have disposed of. Therefore, he had intercourse with, at least, a few persons all the while.

† Those who believe that Hilarion wrought actual miracles, can swallow this story about the woman being made fruitful by his *prayers*. What must *they* think who have less faith in Hilarion's miraculous power ? We do not like the story. He and the woman appear to have been alone together. He saw her again, the year after, with a son. *He had seen naked women in imagination, and thought them real.*

torian prefect, a lady highly esteemed among her people, and more highly among the Christians; when she was returning with her husband and three children from a visit to blessed Antony, was stopped near Gaza by their illness. For at that place either on account of the impurity of the air, or (as afterwards appeared) for the glory of Hilarion, the servant of God, the children were seized with a semi-tertian ague, and despaired of by all the physicians. The mother lay moaning among her children, and ran about among them, as if they were already dead. But being told that a certain monk lived in the neighboring desert forgetting her pomp of ladyship, and regarding herself only as a mother, she went forth attended by her maids and eunuchs, and was hardly persuaded by her husband to mount an ass. When she had come to him, she said: "I beseech thee by Jesus, our most merciful God; I call upon thee by his cross and blood, to restore me my three sons; so may the name of the Lord our Saviour be glorified in a city of the Gentiles. Let his servant enter Gaza, and let the idol Marnas fall." When he refused, and said that he had never gone out of his cell, and that it was contrary to his custom to enter a town or even a village; she prostrated herself upon the ground, and cried out: "Hilarion, servant of Christ, restore me my children; save here in Syria, thou whom in Egypt St. Antony held in his arms." All who were present wept; even he, while refusing, wept. What need to say more? The woman would not retire, until he promised that after sunset he would enter Gaza. After he came, he touched the couches and the feverish members of the children, and called upon Jesus. Then, oh wonderful! the sweat burst forth from all three, as from so many fountains. The same hour they took food, recognized their mourning mother, and blessing God, they kissed the saint's hand. This having been afterwards reported far and wide, people eagerly flocked to him from Syria and Egypt, so that many believed in Christ and entered the monastic profession. Hitherto there had been no monasteries in Palestine, nor had a monk been known in Syria before Hilarion.

He was the founder and instructor of this order and way of life in this province. The Lord Jesus had old Antony in Egypt ; in Palestine he had Hilarion, a younger man.

15. Facidia is a suburban village of Rhinocorura, an Egyptian city. From this village, a woman who had been blind for ten years, was brought and introduced to Hilarion by the brethren, of whom a considerable number now staid with him. She said that she had spent all her substance on physicians. He answered : " Had you given to the poor what you squandered on physicians, Jesus, the true physician, would have healed you." But when she continued to cry and beg for mercy, he spit in her eyes, and immediately the same effect followed as in the similar case of the Saviour.

16. A charioteer of Gaza was smitten by a demon while driving ; and became all over stiff, so that he could neither move his hand nor turn his head. Therefore being laid upon a bed, he was able only to use his tongue in prayer. He heard in answer to his prayer, that he could not be healed until he should believe in Jesus, and promise to renounce his trade of charioteer.\* He believed, promised, was healed, and exulted more in the salvation of his soul than of his body.

17. There was also a young man of the territory of Jerusalem, who was vain of his great strength. He could carry ten bushels of wheat a long way, and thought it a glorious feat that he could outdo an ass in carrying burdens. Having been seized by a demon of the worst kind, he could not be confined by chains or doors. He bit off the noses and ears of many, crushed the feet of some, and broke the legs of others. So much did he terrify every body, that he was loaded with chains and ropes, which were kept stretched by persons drawing different ways, and so he was dragged along like a mad bull to the monastery. The brethren were terrified when they saw this huge maniac, and told the father of his arrival. He kept his seat, and ordered him

\* His profession was to drive a chariot in the games of the circus, which being heathenish were not attended by Christians.

to be brought in and let go. When he was released, the father said : " Bow thy head and come forward." He began to tremble, and bent his neck ; nor did he dare to look Hilarion in the face, but began to lick his feet as he sat. The demon who possessed the young man having been exorcised and tortured, went out of him on the seventh day.

18. But we must not pass over in silence the case of Orion, a wealthy and chief man of Aila, a city by the Red Sea. Having been possessed by a legion of demons, he was brought to Hilarion. His hands, neck, sides, and feet were loaded with iron : and his grim eyes betokened his furious rage. Whilst the saint was walking with the brethren and interpreting some passage of Scripture, the demoniac broke loose from the hands of those who held him, and coming up behind his back, threw his arms round him, and lifted him up on high. All present uttered a cry ; for they apprehended that he would crush the saint's limbs, emaciated as they had been by fasting. " Silence ! (cries the good man),—leave my wrestler to me." So he reached his hands back over his shoulders, and touched the demoniac's head ; then seizing him by the hair, he drew him round before his feet, and stretching out the man's hands and arms in a straight line, and treading on both his feet, he groaned and said, " Writhe ! writhe ! thou mob of demons !" When the man howled and bent back his neck until his head touched the ground, Hilarion cried out, " Lord Jesus ! release the captive !—release the captive ! Thou canst conquer many as well as one." I relate a wonderful thing, when I say that out of the mouth of this one man proceeded a confused mixture of voices, like the clamor of a multitude of men. So the man was cured. Not long afterwards, he came to the monastery with his wife and children, bearing many gifts as thank-offerings. The saint asked him if he had not read what Gehazi and what Simon Magus had suffered,—the one for receiving and the other for offering a reward ; how the former had sold, and the latter had offered to buy, the grace of Holy Spirit ? When Orion said, weeping, " Accept my presents and give them to the

poor," he answered, "Thou canst make a better distribution of them than I can; for thou walkest about in a city and art acquainted with the poor. As for myself, who have given away my own goods,—why should I seek those of others. The name of the poor is to many the occasion of covetousness; but mercy has no disguise. No one better expends than he who reserves nothing for himself."\* Then addressing him as he lay on the ground and was sad, he said, "Be not sorrowful, my son; what I do for myself I do also for you; for if I accepted of these things, not only would I offend God, but the legion of demons would return upon you.

19. We must not omit to mention the case of Majomites a citizen of Gaza, who whilst hewing stones for building by the sea-shore near the monastery, was wholly disabled by a palsy, and was carried by his fellow-workmen to the saint, and being healed immediately, returned a sound man to his labor. We have to remark, in explanation, that the sea-shore, which extends from Palestine to Egypt, is made rough by the gradual hardening of the naturally loose sands into rock. The grains and pebbles cohering by degrees, lose the quality of yielding to the touch, but still retain to the eye the appearance of sand.

20. A Christian from Italy, but now a citizen of the same town, was keeping horses to run in the chariot races of the circus, against those of his rival, a chief magistrate of Gaza, who was a devotee of the idol Marnas.† This custom was observed in the Roman cities from the time of Romulus, that four-horse chariots should run seven times round the circus, and he whose horses outran those of his competitor gained the victory. Now

\* Let us give due credit to those primitive monks—so different from their successors—for their sincere and consistent renunciation of worldly wealth and pleasure. Yet Hilarion's doctrine here differs from St. Paul's. See Eph. iv. 28, and 1 Tim. v. 8.

† The worship of this idol seems to have been confined to Gaza; though some believe that this was Jupiter under a Syriac name. See Calmet's Dictionary; also Moreri, Grande Dictionnaire.



this man's competitor had an enchanter, who, by uttering certain devilish imprecations, checked the speed of the Italian's horses, and made those of the opposite party run faster. Therefore the Italian came to St. Hilarion for relief, praying, not that his competitor might be injured, but that he himself might be defended. The venerable saint thought it a silly business to waste his prayers about such a trifle ; therefore he smiled and said, " Why not sell your horses for the salvation of your soul, and give the proceeds to the poor ?" He answered that he did not act from choice, but was bound as a magistrate to take part in the races. But he could not as a Christian use magical arts ; but that he came rather to a servant of God for assistance against the Gazans, who were enemies of God, and did not insult himself so much as they insulted the Church of Christ.

At the request, therefore, of the brethren who were present, he ordered the earthen cup out of which he usually drank, to be filled with water and given to the petitioner. The Italian took it and sprinkled his stable, horses, chariot and charioteer, and also the bars of the starting places in the circus, with the water. Great was the expectation of the populace ; for the competitor had ridiculed the action, and blazed it abroad ; while the partisans of the Italian exulted in the confidence of his gaining the victory. They were not disappointed. When the signal was given, his horses flew like the wind, and his competitor's were impeded in their course. The wheels of his chariot glowed, and the other party could scarcely keep in sight of them. There was a great clamor of the populace : the heathen, themselves, exclaimed that their God Marnas had been conquered by Christ. But the opposite party were furious, and demanded that Hilarion should be punished as a Christian enchanter. The victory being manifest, however, both in these games and many afterwards, caused great numbers to embrace Christianity.\*

\* In section 16, preceding, a charioteer of the circus is required to renounce his trade before Hilarion would heal him. The Church condemned all these heathenish shows and amusements ; yet now Hilarion

21. In the same seaport of Gaza, a young man was desperately in love with a virgin dedicated to God. Having failed to win her by the frequent use of touches, nods, jokes, whispers, and other usual means of overcoming virgin modesty, he went to Memphis, famous for its magicians, that he might, by confessing his passion, arm himself with magical charms, and thus renew his attempt upon the virgin. Accordingly he took lessons during a year from the priests of Æsculapius, a god who does not cure souls, but destroys them, he returned, rejoicing in his anticipated conquest over female virtue, and buried under the threshold of the girl's house, certain magical words and figures, engraven on a plate of Cyprian brass. Hence the virgin began to rave; and casting off her head-covering, to twirl her hair, gnash her teeth, and call out the young man's name. Her violent passion rose to madness. She was therefore led by her parents to the monastery, and delivered to the old man; the demon howling the while and confessing—"I was forced, I was carried away from Memphis against my will. There I often deluded men with dreams. Oh the tortures that I suffer! You drive me out, and I am then bound fast under the threshold. I cannot depart, unless the young man, who holds me shall let me go." Then said the old man, "You are a mighty fellow, indeed, to be held fast by a thread and a plate of brass! But, tell me: How durst you enter a girl dedicated to God?" "That I might preserve her virginity," said the demon. "You preserve! You betrayer of chastity! Why did you not rather enter into him who sent you?" "How could I enter into him who possessed my colleague, the demon of love?" But the saint was unwilling, before he had purified the virgin to order either the young man or the magical tokens to be sought for; lest either the demon, freed from the charm, should seem to

works a miracle to give a Christian competitor the victory in a succession of chariot races! Jerome's apology for this miracle is unsatisfactory. The Italian was not obliged to be a magistrate and a chariot-racer; and if he had been, can we believe that God would work miracles to make his horses run faster?

have withdrawn, or he himself should seem to have given credit to what the demon asserted. He said that demons were all deceitful and crafty impostors; and rather chid the virgin, after she was restored to her senses, for doing such things as gave entrance to the demon.\*

22. Not only through Palestine and the neighboring cities of Egypt and Syria did his fame spread, but even to the remotest provinces.

There was among the body guards of the emperor Constantius, a cadet,† whose red hair and fair skin, showed him to be a northern German. He had been from his infancy possessed by a demon, who compelled him by night to howl, groan, and grit his teeth. He secretly unfolded his case to the emperor, and obtained a permit to travel by the public post, with letters to the governor of Palestine, who had him conducted to Gaza with a large and honorable retinue. When he inquired of the town councillors where Hilarion the monk resided, the Gazans were greatly terrified, supposing that he had been sent by the emperor. They conducted him to the monastery, both to show honor to one so recommended, and to wipe out any offence that might have been taken at their former ill treatment of Hilarion. The old man was then walking about over the soft sands, and murmuring over, I know not what from the Psalter. But when he saw so great a crowd approaching, he stopped. After saluting them all, he blessed them with uplifted hand; and, in an hour's time, he commanded all to depart, except the cadet with his retinue, whom

\* This last sentence suggests the true cause of this girl's madness. She was madly in love with the young man, and was not permitted to marry him. As to the young man's sorcery and Hilarion's miracle, they were equally believed by Jerome, and are equally credible.

† Cadet. The Latin is *candidatus*. The *Candidati* of this period were select men of distinguished families and fine person, who kept guard in the emperor's palace. Hence the honorable manner in which he was conducted. Jerome says that his family was a powerful one among the Saxons and Allemans, who were Northern Germans. For *candidatus*, see Du Fresne's Glossary.

he ordered to remain, because he knew from his eyes and countenance what he had come for. Immediately, therefore, when the servant of God began to question him, the man was so lifted up that his feet scarcely touched the ground; and roaring out ferociously, he answered in the same Syrian language in which he had been interrogated. Though Frankish\* and Latin were the only languages that he knew, his answers were heard in pure Syriac; not a word was mispronounced, not an idiom of the language of Palestine was wanting. Thus he confessed in what manner he had entered into him. And that his interpreters, who understood only Greek and Latin, might understand, he interrogated him also in Greek. The demon answered in the same language,† and pretended to have been compelled by the force of many charms and magical arts. "I care not (said the saint) how you came to enter; but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to go out." When he was cured the demoniac offered him ten pounds as a reward. But instead of receiving it, the saint presented him with a loaf of barley bread, telling him that they who lived on such food, set no higher value on gold than on dirt.

23. But to cure men was a small matter to him. Brute animals, raging with madness, were brought to him every day; among the rest a huge Bactrian camel which had trodden down and bruised many, which was hauled to him by more than thirty men, with ropes stretched out on all sides. The beast's eyes were bloodshot; he foamed at the mouth; his lolling tongue was swollen; and above all, his wild roaring was terrible. Then the old man told them to let him loose. Instantly every man, both those who brought him and those who were about the old man, took to his heels and ran away. Then the old man walked up to him, and said in Syriac—"You are not going to frighten me, Mr. Devil, big as you are. You are the same to me whether you take the body of a little fox, or of a huge camel." Meanwhile he

\* The Germans were now called Franks and their language Frankish.

† It seems that demons understand all languages perfectly. 'Tis a pity that they do not help the antiquaries to interpret ancient inscriptions.

stood with outstretched hand. The monstrous beast came up, as if he would devour him ; but instantly fell down and lay with his head to the ground. All that were near, wondered to see such tameness follow such ferocity. But the old man taught them, that the devil, in order to afflict men, often took possession of their beasts ; and that he had such a burning hatred against them, that he desired to destroy not only themselves but their property, as he had destroyed Job's goods before he attacked his person. Nor should any one (he said) be disturbed, because by the Lord's command two thousand swine had been killed by demons, for this was the only way by which the spectators could be convinced, that so great a multitude of demons had gone out of the demoniac.

24. Time would fail me to recount all the wonders which he performed. To such a height of glory was he elevated by the Lord, that blessed Antony, hearing of his manner of life, wrote to him,\* and received his letters gladly, and if at any time the sick came to him from the parts of Syria, he would say to them, "Why trouble yourselves to come so far, when you have near you my son Hilarion?" After his example then, innumerable monasteries began to rise through all Palestine ; and all the monks zealously resorted to him. Perceiving this, he praised God for his grace, and exhorted them all to make progress in spirituality, saying—"The fashion of this world passeth away ; and that is the true life which is purchased *by renouncing the comforts of the present life.*"

25. But wishing to give an example of humility and of duty, he visited the cells of the monks on stated days before the vintage. After this was known, the monks flocked to him, and, with such a leader at their head, made the tour of the monasteries, carrying provisions for his journey ; for sometimes no fewer than two thousand men were congregated on the journey. But after a

\* St. Antony could not write and hated correspondence by letters, says Athanasius in his life, ch. 20.

time, every village gladly offered food to the neighboring monks for the entertainment of the travelling company of saints.

But how much care he took to pass by no brother, however humble, is evinced by the fact, that when he was going through the desert of Kadesh to visit one of his disciples, with a vast retinue of monks, he came to Elusa, as it so happened, on the very day on which the annual solemnity had collected the people in the temple of Venus. They worship her there on account of Lucifer\* whom the Saracens worship. But the town is itself a semi-barbarous one, on account of its situation among deserts. Hilarion had often healed Saracens afflicted with evil spirits. Therefore, the people, when they heard that he was passing by, came forth in crowds to meet him, with their wives and children; and bowing their heads cried out in the Syrian language, Barech! that is, bless! He received them meekly, and exhorted them to worship God rather than stones. At the same time he wept profusely, with eyes lifted towards heaven, and promised that if they would believe in Christ, he would often visit them. Wonderful was the grace of the Lord! No sooner had they let him go, than he marked out the foundation of a future Church, and their priest was signed with the sign of Christ.

26. Another year also, when he was going forth to visit the monasteries, and was writing down a list of persons with whom he would abide, and whom he would call on as he passed; the monks knowing a brother who was rather parsimonious, and being desirous to have him cured of this vice, asked him to abide with this man. "What, said he, "Do you wish to injure yourselves, and vex a brother?" When that parsimonious brother heard of this saying, he was ashamed of himself. With much ado, and the help of all the monks, he could hardly prevail upon

\* Lucifer—*Bringer-of-light*—the morning star, is the name of the planet Venus, when it shines in the morning. Under this name the Saracens, as the Arabians were now called, worshipped the planet, which the Greeks and Romans considered as the star of Venus, the goddess of beauty and of love.

Hilarion to put his monastery into the list of abiding places. Ten days afterwards they arrived at his monastery and took up their lodgings. The parsimonious brother placed guards in the vineyard, and whenever any of the visitors attempted to enter, these watchers drove them away with stones and clods and the whirling of slings; so that the next morning, they had to go away without having tasted the grapes. The old man laughed in his sleeve at this treatment, and seemed not to know what had happened.

27. Then they were received by another monk of liberal disposition, named Sabas, (we give his name because he was liberal, but conceal the name of the niggardly one.) Because it was the Lord's day, they were all invited into the vineyard, that by eating grapes they might before dinner time, alleviate the fatigues of the way. "But (said the saint) cursed is he who seeks the refreshment of the body before that of the soul. Let us pray, sing psalms, and pay our duty to the Lord; then we will hasten into the vineyard." When the service was finished, he stood on a high place and blessed the vineyard; then he sent in his sheep to feed. They who fed on the vineyard were not less than three thousand. The usual product of the vineyard was estimated at one hundred jugs of wine. Twenty days after this visit, it produced three hundred and twenty jugs! Moreover, that niggardly brother not only gathered less than usual, but that which he did gather, all turned to vinegar—much to his sorrow! This the old man had predicted to many of the brethren. But he usually denounced a curse upon those monks, who, through want of faith in the future, saved their property and exercised diligence to lay up food or clothing, or any transitory thing.\*

\* In the two foregoing chapters we have a picture of the golden age of monkery in the deserts of Palestine. St. Hilarion by thirty or more years of monkish ascetism in the desert, becomes what in India was called a Sannyasi, or Saint of the first order, believed to possess the power of working miracles. Multitudes flock to him, disciples gather around him; monasteries are planted all through the desert, in spots where water and a fruitful soil would enable them to live by their industry. Now the

28. Finally there was a brother, whom he observed to watch his little garden too cautiously and fearfully, and to have a little hoard of money. Therefore he banished him to the distance of five miles from the monastery. Thus banned, he was desirous to conciliate the old man's favour, and therefore made frequent visits to the brethren, especially to Hesychius, who was a favorite of his. One day he brought from his new garden a bundle of green peas, as they grew on the stems. In the evening when Hesychius put them on the table of the monastery, the old man cried out that he could not bear the smell of them, and asked whence they had come. Hesychius answered, that a certain brother had brought them as an offering to the brotherhood, of the first fruits of his garden. "Don't you perceive a nauseous scent?" said the old man. "Don't the peas stink of avarice? Give them to the cows; give them to any brute animals, and see if they will eat them." When Hesychius, according to order, put them into the cow-stable, the cattle were frightened, set up an unusual bellowing, and breaking loose, ran away in different directions. For the old man had this gift; that from the smell of bodies and of clothes, and of things which any one had touched, he knew with what demon, or what vice, they had been in contact.\*

great father Hilarion assumes, in some respects, the style of an Eastern prince. With a train of two or three thousand followers, he makes visitations of the communities of monks, over whom he exercises spiritual sovereignty. These communities cultivate gardens and vineyards; the fruits and the wine of which, not only sustain their lives, but comfort their hearts. Nature, violated by monkish austerities, will, in some way, resume her power. The great father chooses the season of ripe grapes, just before the vintage, to visit the monasteries, and to feast his choice disciples. The communities dread the visit of this devouring horde. But some of them freely open their vineyards to the great father's sheep—(not goats.) These are selected to be visited. Three thousand *sheep*, feasting on a vineyard that usually produces one hundred jugs, make it produce three hundred and twenty! But when the great father happens to visit where his sheep are stoned out of the vineyard, his curse diminishes the grapes, and turns the wine to vinegar!

\* So had the cows it appears. Hilarion is not the only monkish saint



29. Being now in the 63d year of his age, and finding himself in a great monastery, with a multitude of brethren, and crowds of people bringing to him those that were sick or possessed by evil spirits, so that the desert was filled all around with people of every sort—he wept daily, and remembered, with incredible longing, his old manner of life. Being asked why he pined with sorrow, he said, “I have returned again to the world; I have received my reward in this life. See, the people of Palestine and of the neighboring provinces make much of me, and I, under pretext of a supply for the brethren of the monastery, have a vile store of goods.” He was saved, however, by the care of the brethren, especially by Hesychius, who was affectionately devoted to the old man’s service. When he had lived during two years in this mournful mood, that Aristinete, mentioned above, who was the governor’s wife, and then had all the governor’s ambition, paid him a visit, and wished to visit Antony also. He said to her, with tears in his eyes, “Fain would I also visit him, if I were not imprisoned in this monastery, and if my going would be of any avail. But it has now been two days since the world was bereaved of such a father.” A few days afterwards a messenger arrived, with the intelligence of Antony’s decease.

30. Others may admire his miracles, his incredible abstinence, his knowledge and his humility. For my part, nothing so astonishes me as his ability to tread all that glory and honor under his feet. There flocked to him bishops, priests, companies of clergymen and monks—of Christian matrons, too (a great temptation)—and from all sides a multitude of the common people, out of the cities and fields—besides mighty men and judges—that they might get some bread or some oil on which he had pronounced a blessing—that had this miraculous power of smell. In the Romish Breviary, which the priests read to the people in Divine worship, it is said of St. Philip Neri, that through his own perfect chastity, he obtained the power of distinguishing chaste from unchaste persons by the smell. The former had a sweet odor; the latter stunk. Also that his heart was so swollen with divine love, that God had to break two of his ribs to give it room in his breast.

ing. But he thought only of solitude—inasmuch that he had resolved on a certain day to depart; and an ass being brought out for the purpose—because he was so emaciated by fasting that he could hardly walk—he attempted to commence his journey. But news of his intention having spread abroad, it seemed as if Palestine had been condemned to devastation and mourning; for more than 10,000 people of every age and both sexes assembled to detain him. He was unmoved by their prayers, and striking the sand with his staff, so as to scatter it about, he said—"I will not make my Lord a deceiver; I cannot bear to see the altars of Christ trampled upon, and the blood of my-children spilt." From these words all inferred that some secret had been revealed to him, which he was unwilling to confess; nevertheless, they constrained him to defer his departure. He then publicly protested that he would neither eat nor drink, unless they suffered him to depart. Seven days afterwards, when he was exhausted for want of food, he bade farewell to many, and came with a numberless multitude of followers to Betilium, where, after persuading the crowds to return, he chose forty monks, who should carry provisions for the journey, and could march fasting till after sunset. After they had visited the brethren of the neighboring desert, and tarried awhile at a place called Lychnos, he proceeded to the castle of Theubatus, to see the bishop and confessor, Dracontius, who lived there in exile, and was wonderfully comforted by the presence of so great a man. Three days afterwards he reached Babylon,\* with much labor, to visit the bishop and confessor, Philo; for the emperor Constantius, who favored the Arian heresy, had banished both bishops into those places. Departing thence, after three days he came to the town of Aphroditos, where he met with the deacon Baisan; who had been accustomed to hire dromedaries, for the purpose of conducting those who were going to visit Antony, through the desert, where little water was to be found. Here

\* Hilarion's course was westward into Egypt. The Babylon here mentioned, was a city near Memphis in Egypt, and near the site of the present Grand Cairo.

Hilarion told the brethren that the anniversary of Antony's death was near, and that he must celebrate a night of watching in the place where he died. Then after three days' journey through a horrible desert, they came to a very high mountain, where they found two monks, Isaac and Pelusianus, one of whom had been Antony's interpreter.

31. As the occasion presents itself, we think it proper to describe, in a few words, the dwelling-place of so great a man as St. Antony.

At the base of a high, rocky mountain, for the space of a mile, some waters issue, which are partly absorbed in the sands of the plain, but partly collected some distance below into a rivulet, on whose banks innumerable palm trees give much beauty and commodiousness to the place. You might see old Hilarion running hither and thither with Antony's disciples. "Here (said they) he used to pray; here to sing psalms; here to labor; and here to sit still. These vines and these little trees he planted with his own hands; that garden spot he arranged himself; this pool for watering the garden cost him much labor; with this spade he dug the ground for many a long year." Hilarion lay down on his bed and kissed it, as if it were yet warm. The little cell was not larger in diameter than would allow a man to stretch himself in it when he lay down. On the mountain, which was ascended with difficulty by a winding path, were two other cells of the same size. Here he used to abide when he would fly from the company of his numerous visitors and disciples. But these cells, hewn out of the solid rock, had no additions except doors. But after they had come to his little garden, "You see (said Isaac) this orchard set with fruit trees, and the ground about them green with pot-herbs. About three years ago, when a herd of wild asses laid it waste, he commanded one of their leaders to stand still, and thumped his sides well with his staff. "Wherefore (said he) do ye eat that which ye have not sown?" From that time, though they came often to drink, the waters, they never touched either his trees or his herbs,"\*

\* This is a more favorable account of the comforts of Antony's abode,

The old man requested them also to show him the place where Antony was buried. They took him aside from the company; but it is not known whether they showed him the place or not. They told him that the motive for keeping the place concealed, according to Antony's command, was to prevent Pergrenius, the wealthiest man in those parts, from taking the body to his village and building a church over it.

32. Then returning to Aphroditos, he retained only two of the brethren with him, and took up his abode in the neighboring desert. Here he exercised such abstinence and such silence, that he declared himself to have then, for the first time, begun to serve Christ.

It was now three years since a cloudless sky had been parching those countries. It was a common saying, that even the elements were mourning for the death of Antony. The people of that place\* were not ignorant of Hilarion's fame. Both males and females, with gloomy countenances, and bodies attenuated by hunger, prayed earnestly for rain to the servant of Christ, as the blessed Antony's successor. When he saw these suppliants, he was wonderfully sorry for them. Raising his eyes to heaven and stretching forth his hands, he prayed for rain, and it came immediately. But behold the dry and sandy region, after it had been refreshed by rains, suddenly produced such a multitude of serpents, and other venomous creatures, that great numbers were bitten, and would have perished immediately if they had not run to Hilarion. All the husbandmen and shepherds, by touching their wounds with oil which he had consecrated, were cured infallibly.

than Athanasius gives in his life of Antony. (See Section 14.) It was not so very dismal a place after all, for a man unburthened with a family to live. The old monk reared many good things in his garden. But except the barley, we are not to believe that he ever tasted one of them!

\* There were three cities in Egypt called Aphroditos. This was probably in Lower Egypt, where sometimes a little rain falls; but in Upper Egypt never. How are we to understand this miraculous drought?

33. Finding himself wonderfully honored \* there also, he went to Alexandria, intending to pass on through that city to the farther oasis of the desert; and because he had never, from the beginning of his monastic life, taken lodging in a city, he put up with some brethren of his acquaintance in Bruchium near Alexandria. There they received the old man with great joy; but when night approached, they heard that his two disciples were saddling his ass, and that he was preparing to depart. Then they fell at his feet, and begged that he would not go. They protested that they would rather die on the door-sill, where they lay, than lose so great a guest. He answered, "Therefore I depart, that I may not bring molestation upon you. Coming events will show you that there is cause why I should leave you suddenly." So there was; for on the next day some Gazans (who were in pursuit of him) came with the governor's officers to the monastery where he had put up, that they might arrest him; for they had the day before got information of his arrival there. They sought for him in vain; they said one to another, "Is it not true, what we heard? He is a magician and knows future events." For after Hilarion left Palestine, and Julian had become emperor, the town of Gaza petitioned him for the death of Hilarion and Hesychius. The emperor having before ordered the destruction of his monastery and of all others, granted the petition, and issued an order that these two should be sought for throughout the world.†

\* No wonder that he was honored, when nature went out of her course to produce occasions for him to work miracles.

† Here at least we have the true reason why Hilarion became uneasy in his monastery, and left it to hide himself in obscure places. Being an intelligent man, he knew that Julian, a hater of the Christian name, was about to become emperor, and that his neighbors the Gazans, whom his miracles had failed to convert, and his great fame and the growing thousands of his monks, had perhaps alarmed, or at least provoked against him, would endeavor to raise a persecution against him and his followers. He took time by the forelock, and fled before the coming storm broke loose upon him. He did not court martyrdom like Antony.

34. Having therefore left Bruchium, he went through the pathless desert to the oasis [the safest refuge that could be found.] Here he spent about a year. But his fame penetrated even into that remote solitude [in the midst of the great African desert.] Believing then that he could not conceal himself in the Eastern countries, where many knew him personally or by report, he then thought of taking a voyage to lonely islands, in order that the sea might hide the man, who was universally known upon the land. About this time his disciple Hadrian came from Palestine, and informed him that the emperor Julian had been slain, that a Christian emperor, Jovinian, was now reigning, and that he ought, therefore, to return to the remains of his monastery. But he refused; and having hired a camel, he came through the vast desert to Paratonium, a maritime city of Lybia, where the unhappy Hadrian, wishing to return to Palestine, that he might resume his former glory as a magistrate, caused Hilarion much injury; for he at last packed up the goods that he had brought for him from the brethren, and went off without his knowledge.

35. Then the old man, having with him a disciple of Gaza, embarked on a vessel that was to sail for Sicily. He offered for sale a copy of the Gospels, which he had written when a young man, that he might get money to pay his passage. When they were crossing the mouth of the Adriatic Gulf, the master's son was seized by a demon, and began to cry aloud, saying, "Hilarion, servant of God, why may we not be safe from your presence even at sea? Wait till I come to land, and do not cast me out here, where I would be precipitated into the deep."\* Hilarion replied, "If my God allow you to stay, stay; but if he cast you out, why lay the blame on me, who am but a sinful man and a beggar?" This he said, lest the sailors and merchants on board should betray him when they came to land. Not long afterwards the boy

\* If this demon was afraid of being cast into the deep, why did the simpleton enter the boy at sea, when he knew that the mighty Hilarion was there? A demon ought to have more sense.

was healed ; the father and all on board having promised that they would not mention his name.

36. When they came to Pachynum, the southwestern cape of Sicily, he offered the copy of the Gospels to the master of the ship for his passage and that of the Gazan. The master was unwilling to accept it ; especially when he saw that they had nothing but this volume and the clothes that they wore. He swore at last that he would not accept of it. But the old man, fired with the confidence of a poor man's conscience, rejoiced in it the more, and in the reflection that, having no worldly goods, he would be taken by the people of the place for a beggar.

37. But apprehending that merchants coming from the East might make him known, he fled to a place twenty miles inland, where, in a deserted old field, he gathered daily a bundle of wood, and laying it on his disciple's back to carry to the nearest village, he there sold it, and thus gained a supply of necessary food, and a little bread besides, for those who might chance to visit them. But truly, as the Scripture saith, *A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden*. One Scutarius was tormented in the church of St. Peter at Rome, and the unclean spirit within him cried out, "A few days ago, Hilarion, servant of Christ, entered Sicily, and as no one knew him, he supposes himself to be hidden ; but I will go and betray him." So he embarked immediately with his servants on a ship in the port, landed at Pachynum, and guided by the demon, came and prostrated himself before the old man's hut, where he was cured.\* This beginning of his miracles in Sicily brought to him afterwards an infinite number of sick people, and of religious men. Among the rest, a chief man of the country, who was swollen with the dropsy, was cured the same day on

\* We will not attempt to discredit the sincerity of Hilarion's desire of obscurity and solitude, especially as it might have been dangerous, or at least unpleasant, for him to return to his ruined monastery near Gaza, after his flight from apprehended danger. But we confidently charge the demons with infatuation, when they defeated their own policy, by playing into his hands ; entering people that he might cast them out ; as if they were *confederates* of his in the guise of *enemies*.

which he came to him. When the man offered him immense rewards, Hilarion repeated to him the Saviour's words, *Freely ye have received, freely give.*

38. Whilst these things were doing in Sicily, Hesychius, his disciple, was seeking the old man throughout the world, searching the coasts and penetrating the deserts, having only this same ground of hope, that wheresoever the old man might be, he could not be hidden. Three years having passed away, the faithful disciple happened to hear at Methone,\* from a Jew that traded in old clothes,† that a Christian prophet had appeared in Sicily, working such miracles that he was supposed to be one of the ancient saints. When Hesychius inquired concerning his dress, gait, language, and especially his age, he could gain no information; for the Jew said, he knew nothing of the man except by report. He then embarked on the Adriatic Sea, and had a prosperous voyage to Pachynum. He made inquiry in a small village on the shore of a bay, and learned by general report where the old man was, and how employed. Nothing excited the popular admiration so much as the fact, that after working such signal miracles, he had refused to accept of any person so much as the fragment of a loaf of bread. To make a long story short, the holy man Hesychius prostrated himself before his old master's knees, watered his feet with tears, and was at last raised up by him. Two or three days afterwards, he was told by the Gazan servant, that the old man could no longer dwell in those regions, but wished to go to some barbarous nations, where his name and fame were unknown.

39. He conducted the old man to Epidaurus, a town of Dalmatia, where after abiding a few days in a field, he could not conceal himself. Here was a monstrous dragon, of the sort called

\* There were several towns of this name in Greece and Macedonia. The one on the coast of Messenia is doubtless meant. From this to Pachynum, the southern point of Sicily, the voyage would be directly across the outer part of the Adriatic Gulf.

† An old trade is this trade in old clothes among the Jews.



in the barbarian language *boa*, from the circumstance that they are so large as to swallow an ox [called *bos* in Greek and Latin.] This dragon devastated the whole province. He drew to himself by the force of his breath, and swallowed, not only cattle and sheep, but husbandmen and shepherds in like manner. The saint ordered a funeral pile to be prepared for the monster, and having by prayer to Christ called him forth and ordered him to ascend the pile of wood, he put fire to it. So then in the sight of all the people, he burnt up the huge beast.\* Then being disturbed in mind, not knowing what to do, nor whither to turn his course, he prepared for another flight, and mentally surveying desert lands, he grieved that whilst his tongue was silent concerning himself, his miracles would still speak.†

40. At that time, the earthquakes that followed the death of the emperor Julian, caused the seas to break over their bounds ; and, as if God threatened another deluge, or would reduce all things to ancient chaos, ships were driven upon mountain sides, and left hanging there. When the Epidaurians saw the waves raging, and mountains of water dashed upon the shore,—fearing what had happened before—that their town should be utterly overthrown—they came to the old man, took him, and placed him before them on the sea-shore as a bulwark. He drew the figures of three crosses in the sand, and stretched forth his hand against the waves. It is incredible, to what a height the swelling sea rose and stood before him. After raging for a considerable time, as

\* None of our readers can, we presume, regard this story of the huge *boa* as anything better than a pure fable. There are such serpents in tropical climates, but none so far north as Dalmatia.

† There is a strange inconsistency assigned to Hilarion's character. Supposing Jerome's statements to be true, and Hilarion, by Divine grace, a miracle-worker, God bestowed this power on the saint, either that he might exercise it for the benefit of mankind and the glory of Christianity, or that he might not. If the former, then the saint resists and flies from the duty assigned him ; if the latter, then why did Hilarion work miracles wherever he went ? Why absurdly choose to do against his own will what he was not bound to do ?

if indignant at the obstacles, it retired by degrees to its proper boundaries. This fact Epidaurus and all that region affirm to this day; and mothers teach it to their children, that they may transmit it to their posterity. Truly was it said to the Apostles, "*If ye believe, ye shall say to this mountain, Pass into the sea, and it shall obey you.*" (Matt. xxi. 21.) This may be fulfilled even to the letter, if any one have the faith of the apostles, and such as the Lord required them to have. For what is the difference, whether mountains descend into the sea, or huge mountain waves become rigid, all of a sudden, and stand up before the old man's feet, whilst the waves everywhere else are fluid.\*

41. All the city wondered at the miracle, which was also much talked of at Salona. The old man hearing of this, fled privately by night, in a small pinnace. Two days afterwards, meeting with a merchant ship, he sailed for the island of Cyprus. Between Cape Malea† and the island of Cythera, some pirates, leaving on shore their fleet, which was navigated, not by sails, but by poles, came out to meet them with two long barges. The waves ran high, and the rowers on the ship, when they saw the pirates coming, began to tremble, to weep, and to prepare their poles to keep off the enemy; and then all ran to tell the old man that the pirates were upon them. When he came upon deck, he looked at them far off and smiled; then turning to his disciples, he said—"Have a little faith; why do you tremble? Are these more numerous than Pharaoh's host was? Yet they were all submerged by the will of God." While he was speaking the piratical

\* Hilarion's most stupendous miracles are located on the obscure and semi-barbarous coast of Dalmatia, and set down from an old tradition of the ignorant and superstitious inhabitants. As to the words quoted from our Saviour to prove that faith can work such a miracle, they are nothing to the purpose, if this and such like expressions of Christ had reference only to the Apostles and first founders of the Church, as experience, if nothing else, has proved to be the fact.

† The southern point of Peloponnesus, now the Morea, in Greece. Cythera is a few miles south of it.

vessels approached with foaming prows, until they came within a stone's cast of the ship. Then he stood on the prow, and stretching forth his hand against them said—"Ye have come near enough." Oh the power of faith! The barges were immediately repelled, and, in spite of the rowers' exertions, were driven backwards. The pirates were amazed to find themselves going backwards. They strove with all their might to reach the ships; but in spite of their efforts, they were carried to the shore faster than they had left it.

42. I pass over many other miracles to avoid swelling the narrative to a large volume. This only will I relate, that as they were going prosperously through [the islands called] the Cyclades, he heard the voices of evil spirits, running out of the cities and villages to the shores, and uttering loud shouts. Then they entered Paphos, a once noble city of Cyprus, and celebrated by the poets; but now by frequent earthquakes lying in ruins, and exhibiting only the vestiges of what it was. Here at the second milestone from the city he took up his obscure abode, rejoicing that for a few days he might live in quiet. But before twenty days had elapsed, all who had unclean spirits throughout the island, began to cry out that Hilarion, the servant of Christ had come, and that they ought to hasten into his presence. Salamis, Curium, Lapitha, and the other cities united in the cry. Most of them [that is, the demoniacs,] asserting that they knew him, and that he was the servant of God, but that they did not know where he was. In about thirty days nearly two hundred men and women had collected around him. When he saw them, he was grieved that they did not suffer him to rest; and in some sort, as if he were fierce to avenge himself, he belabored the demoniacs so with the vehemency of his prayers, that some were cured immediately, others in two or three days, and all within a week.\*

\* We would not judge uncharitably; yet the conduct of Hilarion, and of the demons too, was so inconsistent, that we must suspect some collusion. Hilarion professing to seek rest and obscurity, places himself on

43. He stayed there two years, always meditating flight. He sent Hesychius to Palestine, to visit the ashes of his monasteries, intending that he should return to him the next Spring. When he returned, accordingly, Hilarion was desirous of sailing again to Egypt, particularly to the parts called Bucolia, because there were no Christians there ; but only a barbarous and fierce nation. But Hesychius persuaded him to go up to a more secret place in the island of Cyprus itself. After a long search he found such a place twelve miles from the sea, among rugged and unfrequented mountains. Thither he then conducted the old man, by a way where it was difficult to scramble up the mountain with hands and knees.

When the old man entered the place, he found it to be a secluded and terrible spot, set all around with trees, and well watered with streamlets descending from the mountain sides above. There was a beautiful garden, with numerous fruit trees ; but he never ate of the fruit. Near the garden were the ruins of an old heathen temple, out of which, as both he and his disciples affirmed, there came both day and night, the sound of innumerable voices of demons, so that you would believe there was a host of them there. He was highly delighted with the place, where he had his antagonists at hand. Here he lived five years, receiving frequent visits from Hesychius ; and here, in extreme old age, he recovered strength ; because on account of the difficulty of getting to the place, and the reported multitude of spirits that haunted it, hardly any one would undertake to come up to him.

One day, however, when he returned from the garden, he saw a man lying before his door, all over paralytic. He asked Hesychius who he was, and how he had been brought there. The man himself answered, that he was steward of the estate to which this garden belonged. The old man wept, and stretching out his hand over the man, he said, " In the name of the Lord Jesus the highway two miles from the city ; and within twenty days—about the time necessary to carry the news over the island—all the demons of the island cry out—" Hilarion is come ; let us go and be cast out !"

Christ, I say unto thee, arise and walk." With wonderful quickness, while the old man was yet speaking, the members of the paralytic received such strength that he began to rise.

After this cure was reported, the necessities of many overcame the difficulties of the pathless ascent. The villagers of the surrounding country kept watch, that Hilarion might not steal away; for a rumor had spread abroad that he could not stay long at one place. This was true; not because he was light-minded and whimsical, but because he had an aversion to human honor and importunity, and desired to live an humble quiet life.

44. Then in his eightieth year, he wrote, with his own hand, a testament in the form of an epistle; and, as his servant had died a few days before, he left to Hesychius, who was absent at the time, all his worldly goods—namely, his copy of the Gospels, his sackcloth coat, his hood and his cloak.

When he fell sick, he was visited by many religious men from Paphos, because they had heard of his saying that he was soon to remove to the Lord, and to be liberated from the bonds of the body. Constantia came also, a pious lady whose son-in-law and daughter he had saved from death by anointing them with oil. He adjured them all not to keep his body even an hour after his death; but to bury it in the same garden, clothed as it was in its hair shirt, hood and rustic cloak.\*

45. Now there was little warmth in his breast, and besides his senses, little of a living man remained; yet he continued to speak with open eyes, "Go forth, my soul, go forth! Why dost thou hesitate? Almost seventy years hast thou served Christ, and dost thou fear death?" With these words he expired. He was buried immediately, and the city heard of his sepulture before it had heard of his death.

46. Hesychius, after he heard of his death, went to Cyprus; and pretending that he wished to dwell in the same garden, in order that he might remove from the watchful inhabitants all

\* He must have had a change of hoods and cloaks, as he had devised one of each to Hesychius.

suspicion of his intention, he at last after ten months succeeded, though at the hazard of his life, *in stealing away the body* ; which he carried to Majumas ; and there, attended by all the monks and citizens, he buried it in the old monastery. The shirt was uninjured, the hood, cloak, and whole body sound as when he was alive, and shedding such fragrant odors, that you would think them scented with sweet ointments.

47. Now, at the close of this work, I must mention the devotion of that most holy woman, Constantia ; who, when she heard that the dear body of Hilarion was taken to Palestine, died forthwith : thus proving her love to God's servant by her death also ; for she had been accustomed to spend her nights watching at his grave, and to aid her prayers by talking to him as if he were present. You may perceive to this day a wonderful contest between the Palestinians and the Cypriots, the former contending that they have his body, and the latter that they have his spirit. And nevertheless, in both places, great miracles are wrought every day ; but more in the garden of Cyprus, perhaps for the reason that he had a greater affection for that place.\*

\* In the two last chapters, we see how far gone Christians were by the year 378, when Hilarion died, in a superstitious veneration for the relics of those who were esteemed great saints. As yet it does not appear that prayers were offered to dead saints, but superstition had gotten within a degree of it. The pious Constantia at Hilarion's grave, talks to the dead saint in order to assist her prayers. The reported miracles at the tomb of this monkish saint, and at the place where he died, show what were the means by which relic-worship and saint-worship came afterwards to be established. He whose filthy old clothes, and unwashed corpse, were affirmed to emit a heavenly fragrance, and whose relics on earth, and spirit in paradise, were believed to have miraculous power on earth, would soon come to be esteemed a sort of God, and therefore to be a proper object of worship.

As monkery was believed to be the perfection of saintship, and the means of acquiring miraculous power,—so monkery led directly to most of the superstitious notions and practices, by which pure Christianity be-

gan to be corrupted almost immediately after its introduction from heathenism and corrupted Judaism into the Church. And it is chiefly to monkery that false pretences to miracles are due, and fictitious legends of miracles came to be written by grave and influential Fathers of the Church, to impose upon the credulity of the superstitious vulgar.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### THE LIFE OF MALCHUS, A CAPTIVE MONK.

*By St. Jerome.*

Translated from the original Latin.

He Relates the Life of Malchus, a Monk of Maronia, a Syrian Village—  
What various Dangers and Misfortunes he underwent—How he was  
oppressed by Captivity, and how he made his Escape.

NOTE.—In this narrative there is much romantic interest, and nothing but  
what is credible. It is not a story of superstitious austerity or pretended  
miracles, but of sufferings and adventures in the desert.

1. They who are preparing for a sea fight, first exercise themselves in port, that they may learn in sham engagements to meet the enemy without fear. So I, after a long silence, desire first to exercise myself in a short work, and to rub off the rust, as it were, from my tongue, that I may prepare myself for a more extensive history. For I have been disposed to write the history of the Church from the time of the Apostles to the present; to explain how and by whom the Church originated, &c.—and how it came into the hands of Christian princes, and thereby gained power and riches, but lost many of its virtues;\* now I proceed to the matter in hand.

2. The village of Maronia stands about thirty miles eastward

\* St. Jerome never wrote the intended history.



from Antioch, the capital of Syria. This village, after having been subject to many lords or patrons, came, whilst I lived as a young man in Syria, into the possession of Father Evagrius, an intimate friend of mine; whose name I mention, that I may show how I came by the knowledge of what I am about to write. Now there lived in that place an old man named Malchus, (a word signifying *king*,) a Syrian by nation and language, as he was in fact a native of the place. There lived with him a woman, very decrepid and apparently near to death. They were both so studiously religious, and so often trod the threshold of the church, that they might have passed for Zacharius and Elizabeth, only they had no John with them. When through curiosity, I inquired of the inhabitants, how these people were connected, whether by marriage, by blood, or by the spirit, all answered with one consent, that they were saints who pleased God; and they added some wonderful things which I have forgotten. Drawn by curiosity, I approached the man, and asked him whether those things were true, I received in answer the following particulars:

3. My son, (said he,) I was a husbandman in the country about Nisibus, and was the only son of my parents. When they would compel me to marry, as being the only stock of the family, and its heir, I answered that I would rather be a monk. How much my father persecuted me with threats and my mother with soft persuasions, to make me betray my chastity, may be judged of by the fact, that I fled from my home and my parents. And as I could not go eastward, because Persia was near,\* and the frontier guarded by Roman soldiers, I turned my feet to the west, carrying some little provision to keep me from want. To be brief in my story, I came at last to the desert of Chaleis, which lies between Immas and Berea, a little towards the south. There finding some monks, I delivered myself to their master, seeking

\* Nisibis was a city of Upper Mesopotamia, near the frontier, between the Roman empire and Persia. Berea (named after the city of that name in Macedonia, mentioned in the Acts,) was situated where Aleppo now stands. The desert of Chaleis lay southeast of it.

food by the labor of my hands, and bridling the wantonness of the flesh by fasting.

After many years, I felt a longing to return to my country, that whilst my mother yet lived—for I had heard of my father's death—I might console her widowhood; and then selling our little possessions, I might give one part to the poor, bestow another part upon the monastery, and—why should I blush to confess my infidelity?—reserve another part for my own comfort. My abbot began to exclaim, that it was a temptation of the devil, and that the snares of the old enemy lay concealed under the fair appearance of honesty; in other words, it was the dog returning to his vomit.\* He added that many monks had been deceived in this manner, and that the devil never exposed himself with open front. He set before me many examples from the Scriptures, and this among the rest, that in the beginning he had deceived Adam and Eve with the hope of becoming Gods. When he failed to persuade me, he fell upon his knees and besought me not to desert him, not to destroy myself, not to look back after I had put my hand to the plough. Wretch that I was! I gained a most evil victory over my monitor, supposing that he aimed less at my salvation than his own comfort. He followed me from the monastery, as if he were conducting my funeral procession; and at last bidding me farewell, he said—"I see thee marked, my son, with the brand of Satan. I ask not the causes; I accept not your excuses; the sheep which strays from the fold is soon devoured by the wolf."

4. To those going from Berea eastward to Edessa, the route is bordered by a desert through which the Saracens are always roving about from place to place. This circumstance makes travellers go in companies, that they may assist one another in case of attack from the robbers. There were in my company, men, women and children of all ages, to the number of seventy; when lo! all of a sudden, a band of Ishmaelites, riding on horses and

\* In such style does monkery speak of a son, the only child of his mother, when he desires to console her in her widowhood.

camels, came rushing upon us. Their long hair was bound with fillets; their half-naked bodies were partly covered with mantles and wide, coarse boots. They had quivers suspended from their shoulders, and their loose bows dangling at their sides. In their hands they carried long spears; for their object was not to fight, but to capture and plunder us. We were seized and hurried off in divers ways. I, the meantime, a hereditary proprietor by a long postliminy, and too late repenting of my purpose, and another, a poor woman, were allotted as slaves to one master. We were taken or rather borne aloft on camels, through a vast desert, always dreading a fall, and rather hanging than sitting upon the camels. Half-raw flesh was our food, and camel's milk our drink.

5. At length, after crossing a great river, we came to the interior of the desert; where, according to the custom of the nation, we bowed our heads to adore the lady and children of our master. Here, as if imprisoned by the desert, I changed my dress, that is, I learned to go naked: for the heat of the air is such, that one can bear no covering, except what modesty requires about the loins. I was charged with tending a flock of sheep; and enjoyed this comparative comfort, that I rarely saw my master and mistress, or my fellow servants. I seemed to be in some respects in holy Jacob's condition; and remembered Moses, who was once a shepherd in the wilderness. I fed upon fresh cheese and milk. I prayed continually, and sang the psalms that I had learned in the monastery. I was delighted with my captivity, and thanked God for so ordering my lot, that I should find in the desert the monastic life, which I was about to lose in my own country.

6. But alas! nothing is safe where the devil is. Oh, how manifold and unspeakable are his wiles! So his envy found me out in my concealment. My master seeing his flock increase, and discovering no fraud in me—for I remembered the Apostles command, that servants must be faithful to their masters as to God—and wishing to reward me, that he might make me more

faithful to him ;—he offered me to wife my fellow servant, the woman who had been captured with me. When I refused, and told him that I was a Christian, and was not allowed to take the wife of another, (for her husband had been captured with her and carried off by another of the band)—my master becoming furiously enraged, drew his sword and made at me ; and unless I had instantly stretched out my arms and embraced the woman, he would have shed my blood.

Now the night came on, darker than usual and sooner than I wished. I led my new companion into a half-ruined cave ; and grief performing the office of bridesmaid, we both loathed our situation without confessing our feelings. Then indeed I felt the burden of my captivity, and prostrate on the ground, began to deplore the character of monk which I had lost : saying, “ Here I am, miserable wretch, saved from the death that I deserve. To this have my crimes led me, that now, when my head is growing grey, I should become a virgin husband ! What profits it, to have for the Lord’s sake despised parents, country and estate ; if I do the very thing, to avoid which, I despised them all ? Unless it be that I have to bear these things because I longed for my country. What shall we do, my soul ? Shall we die or conquer ? Shall we wait the Lord’s hand, or be pierced with our own sword ? Turn thy hand against thy body, for its death is less to be dreaded than thine. Preserved chastity has its martyrdom also. Let Christ’s witness lie unburied in the desert ; I will be to myself both persecutor and martyr.” When I had thus spoken, I drew my glittering sword in the dark, and turning its point against my breast, I said, Farewell, unhappy woman, you shall have me a martyr rather than a husband.\* Then she fell at my feet, and said, “ I pray thee by Jesus Christ, and adjure

\* Here are monkish heroics ! Our hero to avoid his master’s sword clasps the woman in his arms ; and then, after a tragical soliloquy, and without a word of explanation with the woman, draws his glittering sword to make himself a martyr to chastity. Was he in mortal fear of a rape ?

thee by the necessity of the hour, shed not thy blood to criminate me. Or, if thou wilt die, kill me first : in this manner let us rather be united. Even if my husband should return to me, I would preserve the chastity which my captivity has taught me, I would sooner die than lose it. Come then, why do you delay to unite us ? Take me as the partner of your chastity, and choose the embrace of the soul rather than that of the body. Our master may think that you are my husband : Christ will know that you are only my brother. We shall easily persuade them of our marriage, when they see us mutually affectionate.

I was astonished, I confess ; and admired her chastity, and loved her as more to me than a wife. However, I never saw her body naked ; and I never touched her flesh, fearing to lose in a time of peace what I had saved in war. In this sort of matrimony, many days passed away. Our supposed nuptials had made us more beloved by our master and mistress. There was no suspicion that we would elope. Sometimes for a month together I was out in the wilderness, attending to the flock.

7. After a long interval, as I sat alone in the desert, and saw nothing but the sky and the earth, I began silently to meditate, and among many things, to remember the society of the monks, and particularly the countenance of my father, who had educated me, kept me, and lost me.\* While I was thinking of these things, I espied a company of ants busy upon a narrow path. You might see them carrying burdens larger than their bodies. Some drew grass-seeds along in their mouths ; others carried earth out of their holes, and dammed out the water by embankments. Mindful of the coming winter—lest the moist ground should turn their store of seeds into herbs,† they cut them in two as they were brought in. Others, like a company of mourners, carried out the bodies of the dead. What was most admirable in so great a multitude, one going out never obstructed another coming in ; but

\* Monks cannot always succeed in suppressing the natural affections, and the sense of duty to parents and to society.

† In those hot climates, the moist winter is the season of vegetation.

rather, if they saw one falling under a burden, they helped him up with their shoulders. In short, beautiful to me was the spectacle which that day exhibited. Hence, I called to mind the proverb of Solomon, who refers us to the wisdom of the ant, and rouses the sluggards by their example. Then I began to weary of my captivity, and longed to see the similitude of the ants realized in the monastery ; where labor should be in common, no one have anything peculiar to himself, but all belong alike to all.

8. The woman met me as I returned to my lodging place. My countenance betrayed the sadness of my heart. She asked me why I was so cast down. I told her the reason, and exhorted her to fly with me. She did not refuse. I required secrecy : she promised it ; and with continual whisperings, we fluctuated between hope and fear. I had in my flock two very large he-goats. These I killed, and made water-sacks of their skins. I also prepared the flesh as provision for the journey. Early in the evening, when our master and mistress supposed us to be asleep in our cave, we entered upon our journey, carrying the skins and certain parts of the flesh. When we came to the river, ten miles off, we blew up the skins ; and getting upon them, we entrusted ourselves to the water. Rowing slightly with our feet, we let the current carry us far below the place where we had entered ; in order that our pursuers might be unable to trace our footsteps, where we landed on the opposite shore. But meanwhile our pieces of flesh, being partly spoilt by the wet and partly lost in the river, we had scarcely a supply for three days remaining. We drank our fill of water, put some into our skins, and ran on, often looking behind us. We travelled chiefly by night, partly to avoid the roving bands of Saracens, and partly on account of the excessive heat of the sun. I yet shudder, when I think of our situation, and though I feel perfectly secure at present, my flesh creeps at the remembrance.

9. On the third day we saw indistinctly two persons mounted on camels, and coming towards us at a rapid pace. Immediately my

mind foreboded evil, supposing that it was my master, and conceiving that death was at hand, and the sun growing dark. While we feared for our lives, and knew that our foot-tracks in the sand would betray us, we saw on our right a cavern, which penetrated deeply into a hill. Here was a refuge; but we were afraid of meeting with venomous creatures, such as vipers, scorpions, and the like, which are apt to creep into cool shades when the sun is hot. Nevertheless, we entered, and immediately within the mouth we saw on the left side a hole, into which we crept. We were afraid to venture any farther, lest we should meet death in our attempt to avoid it; and we considered that if it pleased God to pity our miseries, we should here find safety; but if he despised us as sinners, then we should find a sepulchre. Imagine our terror, when we saw the master and a servant standing at a short distance before the cavern, to which they had traced us. Oh, how much worse than death itself is the expectation of death! Again my tongue stammered with fatigue and dread, and fancying that I heard the master call, I durst not utter a word.

He sent his servant to fetch us out of the cave, whilst he held the camels with his drawn sword in hand, waiting for us to come out. The servant walked a few steps into the cave, having passed us, unaware of our presence near the mouth, because his eyes were blinded by the glare of light out which he had just come. Then he made the cavern resound with his voice—"Come out, you thieves!" he cried—"come out and die! Come quickly; the master is waiting for you." While he was yet speaking, we saw a lioness come out of the inner darkness, and spring upon him. She seized him by the throat, and drew him all bloody into her dark den. Blessed Jesus! how frightened we were, and yet how glad! We saw our enemy perish without the knowledge of the master, who suspected from the delay that we were resisting him, being two against one. Impatient to satiate his wrath, he came, sword in hand, into the cave, and with a furious voice chid the slothfulness of the servant. He was seized by the wild beast, before he reached our hiding-place. Who would believe it, that the

wild beast fought for us in our immediate presence? But when our first fear was removed, a similar death was presented to ourselves, except that it was better to meet the rage of a lion than the wrath of a man. We were inwardly afraid, and not daring to move, we waited the event, fortified amidst such dangers only by the consciousness of chastity.\* In the morning, the lioness fearing a snare, and perceiving that she was discovered, took her young one in her mouth, and went away, leaving us her den. Still, however, not feeling well assured, we did not immediately venture out, but waited, fearing that if we went out, we should meet the lioness. At last, however, in the evening, we were so far relieved of our dread that we ventured out, and saw the camels—of the sort called dromedaries, on account of their speed—quietly ruminating. We mounted them, and being refreshed by a new supply of provisions, we reached the Roman camp† after a journey of ten days through the desert. Presenting ourselves before the tribune,‡ we related to him the whole affair. We were sent on to Sabinianus, governor of Mesopotamia, and there we received the price of our camels. When we came to the monastery which I had left, I found that my old abbot had fallen asleep in the Lord. Therefore, I came on to this place, and reported myself to the monks. This woman I delivered to the virgins, loving her indeed as a sister, but not trusting myself to her, even as a sister.

Such is the story which old Malchus told me when I was a young man. I now relate it to you in my old age. To the chaste I have related a history of chastity. I exhort virgins to guard their chastity. Do you tell it to posterity, that they may know, that among swords, deserts, and wild beasts, chastity is never a captive; and that a man devoted to Christ may be killed, but can never be conquered.

\* It was a favorite fancy among the monks that lions, and other noxious animals, would not hurt those who preserved their chastity.

† This being a frontier of their empire, the Romans always kept garrisons and camps in it.

‡ The military tribune was about equal to a modern colonel.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### SULPICIOUS SEVERUS.

THIS writer furnishes some valuable documents on the early history of monachism in the Church. We shall present the reader with a translation of them after we take a brief notice of the author.

Sulpicius Severus was a native of Aquitania, in the southern part of Gaul. He wrote a compend of church history in two books. This history terminates at the year 400. His other works are .The Life of St. Martin, bishop of Tours in Gaul; three Epistles concerning St. Martin; and three Dialogues, the first of which is in relation to the eastern monks, and the other two concerning the miracles of his hero, St. Martin, who was the founder of monachism in Gaul. These works, beginning with the Life of St. Martin, are written in a pure and elegant Latin style, and present a lively and entertaining picture of monachism about the year 400. They are elegant specimens of the Romance of Monachism, both in the real life of the monks, and the fabulous stories of miracles, that were current among them. Severus tells so many of these stories concerning St. Martin and the Egyptian monks, that Dupin accuses him of credulity. The accusation is just, but is applicable to Athanasius, Jerome and others, as well as to Severus,—but perhaps in a less degree, especially because Severus was a disciple of St. Martin, and had sufficient opportunity of learning the truth or falsehood of many

stories that he tells of St. Martin's miracles. We can hardly let him off with the simple charge of credulity ; we fear that he was guilty—like other Fathers—of intentional falsehoods, that he might glorify his hero and promote monkery, which he and most Christians of his age deemed to be the perfection of Christianity.

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## THE LIFE OF ST. MARTIN OF TOURS.

BY SULPICIUS SEVERUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN.

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### PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

Most men, vainly pursuing the glory of the world, suppose that by writing the lives of great men they shall acquire a lasting reputation for themselves. Yet the profit which they expect to derive from such an undertaking turns out to be neither durable nor great ; for although they may hand down their names to posterity, and may excite in their readers an emulation of the great men whose example they set forth ; still they gain nothing by their writings in respect to the felicity of eternal life. For what profit will they reap from the fame of their writings, which must perish when the world is destroyed ? And what good has posterity derived from reading how Hector fought and Socrates philosophized ?—When it is not only folly to imitate, but madness to do less than resist the influence of their example : seeing that they who estimate human life only by its present actions, build their hopes upon fables invented by poets and philosophers, and surrender their souls to the corruptions of the grave ; for they seek to live only in the memory of mankind : whereas it is the duty of man to seek eternal life, rather than eternal fame :—and *that*, not by writing nor fighting nor philosophizing, but by living

a pure and religious life. This error, transmitted by our literature, has prevailed so far as to render many emulous of the reputation of a vain philosophy or of foolish valor. Wherefore I deem that I shall be well employed in writing the life of a most holy man for an example to others, so that my readers may be incited to true wisdom, heavenly warfare and decisive valor.

In this undertaking we have regard to our own interest, inasmuch as we hope, not for an empty fame amongst men, but for an eternal reward from God : For although we have not ourselves lived so as to be a fit example to others, yet we have taken pains to set before the public view a character worthy of all imitation. Therefore I begin to write the life of St. Martin, in which I shall relate what he did both before and after he became bishop. I have been unable, however, to learn all the particulars of his life, inasmuch as those things which occurred privately, to himself, are unknown to others, because he sought not the praise of men, and therefore concealed his miracles. But even of those that came to our knowledge, I have omitted the greater part ; because I thought it sufficient to notice such as are most important. It behoved us also to consult the reader's taste ; as a superabundance of such things we feared might cause some of them to be disrelished. But I pray my readers to give full credit to my narrative, and not to think that I would write anything but what was well authenticated ; on the contrary, I would rather say nothing than give currency to a falsehood.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.—This preface strikes the key-note of the whole work, and indeed of the religious sentiments and spirit of the age. Taking a one-sided view of the apostolical cautions respecting an undue attachment to the present life, the enthusiast of the fourth century imbibed a sovereign contempt for the world in which God had placed him, and imagined that the time occupied in its concerns was time wasted, and that any pleasure derived from it was a deduction from eternal happiness.

Among the earthly pleasures deemed hurtful to the soul, were those of secular literature. To read books which did not treat

of religious and devotional matters, was thought to be a dangerous, if not an essentially sinful employment of the mind. This condemnation of literary enjoyments and human science was not, however, so very unreasonable in the fourth century as it would be in modern times. As yet Christian writers had written on nothing but religion : and all secular literature was of heathen origin, and the old system of heathen idolatry and superstition, though rapidly declining, was far from being extinct. The struggle between heathenism and Christianity still occupied much of the Church's attention, and the influence of heathen literature and philosophy on the minds of Christian professors, was regarded by the clergy with a jealousy not altogether unreasonable.

St. Jerome, the most learned of the Fathers, gives, in his letter to Eustochium, a serious, but to us an amusing account of the effect which the study of heathen writers had upon his conscience, when he was yet a young man. He wished in this letter to dissuade Eustochium, a Christian virgin, from indulging herself in reading the heathen authors, especially the poets. "Do not desire (said he) to appear well read, nor to amuse yourself or others with the sportive songs of the lyric poets. What concord hath Christ with Belial? What has Horace to do with the Psalter? or Virgil with the Gospels? or Cicero with St. Paul? Though all things are pure to the pure, and nothing is to be rejected which is received with thanksgiving; yet we ought not at the same time to drink the cup of Christ and the cup of demons. I will tell a story of my own suffering on this account.

Many years ago, I was at home with my parents, sister and other kindred, and what was a harder trial, surrounded by the usual luxuries of the table; and having made myself (figuratively) a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and going as a soldier of Christ to Jerusalem, I was not able to give up the library which I had collected with great care and labor at Rome. Therefore, wretch that I was, when fasting I read Cicero's works, and after frequent night-watches, when tears and sorrows at the remembrance of my sins had broken forth, I would afterwards

take up the comedies of Plautus. When I came to myself again and began to read the prophets, their style appeared rude and uncultivated; and because I saw their light with darkened eyes, I supposed that the fault was not in the eyes but in the sun.

Whilst the old serpent thus deluded me, a deeply-seated fever took possession of my exhausted frame. My restless members so wasted away, that my bones scarcely hung together. My body became cold and no sign of life remaining but a slight motion of the heart, I was given up for dead. I was then suddenly rapt in spirit and carried before the tribunal of the judge, where there was such a splendor of light from those standing around, that I was prostrated by the effulgence, and durst not look up. Being asked about myself, I answered that I was a Christian. "You lie, (said the judge) you are no Christian, but a Ciceronian; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Then I was dumb; and the judge having ordered me to be scourged, I felt with every stroke of the whip, a keener torment from the fire of my conscience, and kept repeating to myself the little verse—"In hell who shall confess to thee?" Then I began to cry aloud and howl forth—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me." This cry mingled with the sound of the whip. Then those who stood before the judge fell on their knees and prayed that he would pardon my youth, and give me space to repent of my error, on the condition that I should be tormented, if I ever read heathen books again. Forced by my critical condition, I was willing to promise even more. I began to swear and call on him to witness my oath, saying—"Lord if I ever again have a secular book, or read one, then I shall have denied thee." Having taken this oath I was dismissed, and returned to the upper world, and to the surprise of all around, I opened my eyes all bathed in tears, so that my agony made even the incredulous believe.

This was no dream or fancy, as the tribunal before which I stood, can testify. I declare that my *shoulders were livid from*

*the beating that I got, and I felt them still aching after I woke from the vision."*

Such is the great Father Jerome's account of what he experienced for reading Cicero, Horace, and Plautus. Who would believe that this same great father of the church would afterwards, as he actually did in an epistle to Magnus, defend the use of heathen authors by Christian ministers? In that epistle he quotes the Hebrew prophets and the Apostle Paul as examples. "What wonder then (says he) if I also desire to convert the wisdom of the Gentiles, on account of the beauty of its eloquence and the graces of its style, into a captive of Israel? If there be anything in it idolatrous or impure, I cut it off, and employ the rest in the service of the Lord."

It does not appear, however, that Jerome ever violated his oath by having or reading heathen authors. He only quoted them from memory to adorn his writings! But if it be sinful to read, is it pious to quote?

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## CHAPTER I.

### The Early Piety of Martin—His Conduct in the Army.

MARTIN was born at Sabbaria, a town of Pannonia,\* and was brought up at Ticinum† in Italy. His parents, in respect to worldly honors, were not of the meanest condition; but they were Pagans. His father was at first a private soldier; afterwards he rose to be military tribune. Martin himself followed arms in his youth: he served in the regular cavalry under the Emperor Constantius; and afterwards under Julian, when Cæsar,‡

\* A province of the Roman empire, now forming a part of the Austrian dominions. It corresponds with Southern Hungary and Slavonia.

† Now Pavia in the Milanese.

‡ The emperors in those days were of two ranks; the first had the title of Augustus, and exercised supreme authority; the second were styled Cæsar, and were assistants and heirs of the supreme emperors. The

not, however, of his own accord ; because from almost his earliest years, the illustrious boy delighted more in the service of God, and panted for sacred employments. For when he was ten years old, he fled to the church in spite of his parents, and demanded to be received as a catechumen.\* Shortly afterwards, being wonderfully taken up with the work of God, he longed for the life of a hermit ; and would have fulfilled his wish, if the infirmity of his youth had not deterred him. Nevertheless, being intent on monasteries and on the church, he continued to meditate in early youth on what he afterwards devotedly fulfilled. But when an edict was published by the emperors, requiring that the sons of veteran soldiers should be enrolled in the army, he was at the age of fifteen betrayed by his father—who was displeased at his happy devotions—seized, chained, and compelled to take the military oath.

He was content with one servant, whom he treated more as the master than as the servant, usually taking off the servant's shoes and cleaning them himself. They ate together ; but Martin acted more frequently as serving-man. He continued in the army almost three years before he was baptised, but untainted with the vices by which soldiers are commonly corrupted. He acted with wonderful kindness and charity towards his fellow-soldiers. His patience and humility were almost superhuman. It is needless to praise his frugality, which he exercised to such a degree, that he might be already esteemed rather a monk than a soldier. By these things he gained in a wonderful degree, the respect and affection of the soldiers. Though not yet regenerated in Christ (by baptism,) he acted the part of a candidate for Julian here spoken of was afterwards sole emperor. He was called the Apostate.

\* A catechumen was a person receiving Christian instruction from church officers preparatory to baptism.

† The universal opinion among the Fathers of these early ages was, that baptism was essential to the forgiveness of sins and the regeneration of the soul. Thus Ambrose of the fourth century, in his book concerning the initiated, chap iv. says, *The catechumen believes ; but without baptism he*

baptism by good works, such as assisting those in distress, comforting the unhappy, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked: he reserved nothing out of his pay but his daily subsistence: being already not a deaf hearer of the gospel, he took no thought for the morrow.

For example, at a certain time, when he had nothing but his arms and his single soldier's vestment, in the midst of a winter so unusually severe, that many were frozen to death, he met at the gate of the city of Ambianum a poor, naked man, whom all passed by when he begged for pity. Martin, full of a Divine spirit, knew from the others showing him no mercy, that the beggar was reserved for him. But what could he do? He had nothing except the cloak or wrapper which he wore; for he had parted with all his other possessions on similar occasions. Drawing his sword, he cut the cloak in two, gave the one part to the beggar, and wrapped the remaining part about himself again. Meanwhile, some of the bystanders began to laugh at the unseemly and scanty appearance of his garment; but many of better understanding began to groan deeply, because they had not acted with similar kindness; since, having more to give, they might have clothed the beggar without stripping themselves.

The following night, when he fell asleep, he saw Christ clothed with the piece of cloak which he had given away. He was commanded to view the Lord attentively, and to recognise the garment. Presently he heard Jesus say with a loud voice to the multitude of angels around him; "See here! Martin, who is yet

*cannot obtain remission of sins, nor imbibe the gift of spiritual grace. And Augustine, in Tract xiii. on John says, However much the catechumen may profit by his instructions, he still bears the burden of his iniquity, of which he cannot get rid until he comes to baptism.—HORNIIUS.*

The reader may see many quotations to the same effect in Wall's History of Baptism.

† The term candidate, as the learned reader knows, is a Latin word signifying a person dressed in white, to denote that he is seeking an office. The custom first followed by office-seekers in Rome was adopted in the Church: those that offered themselves for baptism having on white gar-



but a catechumen,\* hath clothed me with this garment." Thus the Lord, conformably to his word recorded in the gospel,—“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my servants, ye have done it unto me.” (Mat. xxv. 40.)—professed himself to have been clothed in the beggar, and to confirm his testimony of so good an action, deigned to show himself in the same garment that had been given to the poor man. At this sight, the blessed man was not elated to human boasting; but acknowledging the goodness of God in relation to his charitable deed, he hastened to be baptised, as soon as he reached the age of eighteen years. Yet he did not immediately quit the army, being overcome by the intreaties of his tribune (or colonel,) who had taken him into his service as a member of his family; for the tribune had promised that when his term of service as tribune had expired, he would himself renounce the world. Martin was induced by the expectation of this to continue in the army almost two years after his baptism, though his military service was during this time, merely nominal.

Soon afterwards, the barbarians having made an irruption into the Gallic Provinces, the Cæsar Julian having collected the army at the city of the Vangiones,† began to distribute a donative. According to custom, the soldiers were called up one by one to receive their gifts. When it came to Martin's turn, he embraced the occasion to obtain his discharge; for he considered that it would be hardly honest in him to receive the donative, and not afterwards to perform his military service for which it was bestowed.

“Hitherto (said he to the Cæsar) I have been your soldier: Let me now be God's soldier. Let him take your donative who merits. Infants also were clothed in white when presented at the baptismal font. Tertullian calls one who is to be baptised, *God's candidate*.

\* Catechumens were not considered as Christians in the full sense of the term, until they received baptism. Before they reached this high privilege, they had in some parts of the Church, to undergo a probation of two years at the least.

† Now Worms on the Rhine.

is about to serve in the war ; I am the soldier of Christ ; it is not lawful for me to fight.”

At this declaration the tyrant was enraged, and said to him, that it was not for the sake of religion that he withdrew from the war, but for fear of the battle that was to be fought the next day. But Martin intrepidly—nay, more firmly by reason of the terror presented to him,—said, “ If my conduct be ascribed to cowardice, and not to faith, then to-morrow I will stand unarmed before the line of battle ; and in the name of the Lord Jesus, protected by the cross instead of shield or helmet, I will penetrate securely into the thickest ranks of the enemy.”

He was ordered to be thrust into prison, that he might verify his words, and be exposed without arms to the barbarians. On the next day, the enemy sent ambassadors to sue for peace, on the condition of surrendering themselves and all that they had. Who can doubt that this was really the saint’s victory, granted to him that he might not be exposed to the battle without arms ? And though the good Lord could have preserved his soldier among the swords and darts of the enemy, yet, lest the eyes of the saint should be pained by seeing the death of others, he obviated the necessity of fighting. Nor indeed ought Christ to give his soldier any other sort of victory than a peaceful conquest of the enemy.

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## CHAPTER II.

Martin’s return to his Country—Meets Robbers and the Devil by the way  
—Converts his Mother—Driven out of the Country by the Arians—Eats  
Hellebore in a Desert Island—Goes to Poitiers and lives as a Monk.

THEN leaving the army, he went to St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, whose faith in divine things was at this time celebrated, and staid some time with him. Hilary tried to lay on him the office of deacon, that he might bind him more closely to himself,

and engage him in the sacred ministry ; but when Martin often resisted the proposal, under the plea that he was not worthy of the office, the discerning mind of the bishop saw, that he might bind him by imposing upon him an office of some apparent humiliation ; he therefore ordered him to take the office of exorcist. This Martin did not refuse, lest he should seem to despise so low an ordination.\*

Not long afterwards, being admonished in a dream that he should with pious care visit his country and his parents, who were still in the bonds of Paganism, he set off with the consent of Hilary, but with his most earnest injunction to return.

He began his journey with a sad heart, they say, assuring his brethern that he was going to suffer many adversities : a prediction that was verified by the event. In the first place, when he was wandering through the Alps on his way to Italy, he fell into the hands of robbers. One of them aimed a blow at his head, with an axe ; but another intercepted the stroke by throwing up his right hand. Nevertheless his hands were tied behind his back, and he was delivered to one of them to be kept and robbed. This fellow, after leading him to a more private place, began to inquire who he was. He answered that he was a Christian. The man asked him also if he was afraid. Martin professed, with great firmness, that he had never felt more secure, because he knew that the mercy of the Lord would give him special protection in times of trial ; and that he had never felt more concern for him, because, being a robber, he was unworthy of the mercy of Christ. Thus he began and preached the Gospel to the robber. In short,

\* The church had by this time become so wealthy and proud, as to have no less than eight degrees of office—namely, 1st. the doorkeeper ; 2d. the reader ; 3d. the exorcist ; 4th. the acolyth, or candle-lighter ; 5th. the subdeacon ; 6th. the deacon ; 7th. the priest ; and 8th. the bishop ; a great advance upon the simple bishops and deacons of Apostolical times. The office of the exorcist was to drive away demons from persons and places. It was no mean office ; for Firmilian in an epistle to St. Cyprian, says—that by the exorcist's voice, the devil is whipt, burnt, and tortured.

the robber was converted ; and in consequence took Martin back to the road, beseeching that he would pray for him. This man afterwards led a religious life ; for the facts just related were told by himself.

Martin then proceeded on his journey. After he had passed Milan, the devil having assumed the appearance of a man, asked him whither he was going. Martin answered, that he was going whithersoever the Lord should call him. "Then," said the devil, "whithersoever you may go, or whatsoever you may attempt, the devil will be your adversary." Then Martin answered in the words of the prophet—"The Lord is my helper ; I will not fear what man can do unto me." No sooner had he said this than his enemy vanished.

According to his presentiment, he freed his mother from the error of Paganism ; but his father persevered in his evil courses. He saved several other persons, however, by his example.

About that time the Arian heresy had spread over the world, and sprung up most of all in Illyricum.\* As Martin almost alone contended against the perfidy of the priests who had embraced Arianism in that country, he was severely persecuted ; he was publicly whipped, and afterwards driven from the city. He then returned to Italy, and hearing that the church in Gaul was also in a disturbed state, in consequence of the banishment of St. Hilary by the violence of the heretics, he established for himself a monastery in the neighborhood of Milan. There too, Auxentius, chief leader of the Arians, grievously persecuted him, and by the outrages of a mob, drove him from the city. Thinking it necessary to yield to the times, he retreated to the Isle of Gallinaria, near the coast of Liguria, [in the north of Italy.] He was accompanied by a priest, a highly-gifted man.

Here in this desolate isle, he lived on roots ; and at this time,

\* This province lay along the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea, and joined Pannonia on the northeast and Italy on the northwest. Martin's parents seem to have been residing in a city of Illyricum at the date of his visit. Martin seems to have taken a very forward part against the Arians.

they say it was, that he ate for food, some poisonons hellebore. When, by the violence of the poison, he felt himself to be at the point of death, he dispelled the imminent danger by prayer, and all his pain was immediately driven away. Not long afterwards, on learning that the penitent emperor (Valens) had granted to St. Hilary the liberty of returning, he set off for Rome with the intention of meeting him there. On his arrival he found that Hilary had left the city; he followed his footsteps to Poitiers, where he received from him a most generous reception. He then founded for himself a monastery near that city.

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### CHAPTER III.

Martin Raises the Dead to Life—Is made Bishop of Tours.

AT that time a certain catechumen joined him, with the desire of being trained in the discipline of so eminent a saint. In a few days he took sick and labored under a violent fever. Martin happened to be then at a distance, and having returned after an absence of three days, he found him a corpse. So sudden was his decease, that he had left the world without baptism. The corpse had been laid out, and was attended by a mourning company of the brotherhood, when Martin came in weeping aloud. Then feeling his soul filled with a holy spirit, he commanded them to leave the cell in which the body lay; then fastening the door he prostrated himself upon the lifeless members of his brother, and after applying himself to prayer for a while, he felt that the Lord's spirit was present within him; then rising a little, and looking steadfastly on the face of the deceased, he awaited confidently the result of his prayer, and the manifestation of the divine mercy. It was scarcely two hours before he saw the dead begin to move by degrees in every member, and open and close his eyelids, in order that he might see distinctly. Then he lifted up his voice to the Lord, and made the cell resound with his

thanksgiving. Those who stood before the door, when they heard this, immediately rushed in. What a wonderful sight to behold him alive, whom they had left dead. Being thus restored to life, he was baptized straightway, and lived many years afterwards. He was among us the first subject and the first evidence of Martin's miraculous powers. The same man used to relate, that when he had left the body, he was brought before the tribunal of the judge, and was grieved to hear the sentence which consigned him to dark places, and to the common herd of departed spirits. Then two angels suggested to the judge, that this was he for whom Martin was praying; whereupon the two angels were ordered to convey him back to life again, and deliver him to Martin.\*

Now the reputation of the blessed man began first to shine, as of one universally esteemed holy, and who might also be esteemed mighty, and invested with genuine apostolical powers.

Soon afterwards, while passing the farm of one Lupician, a man of high honor in the world, his ears were assailed by the loud cry of a company of mourners; at which being troubled, he went up and inquired what the matter was. He was told that one of the servants had hanged himself. He entered the apartment in which the body lay, shut out the crowd, prostrated himself over the body, and for a while engaged in prayer. Presently signs of life appeared in the countenance, and the dead looked up with languid eyes into his face. Feebly endeavoring to rise, he took the blessed man by the hand, and thus getting upon his feet,

\* Two things are evident from this story: first, that (as we said in a former note,) in the opinion of the church, no adult person, dying unbaptized, could be saved—unless, as we omitted to mention, he died as a martyr to Christ; then he was thought to be baptized in his own blood: and second, that the opinion had by this time taken root of the efficacy of prayers for the dead. Tertullian had long before entertained this notion but he was not esteemed orthodox. Cyprian, a later and better man, said, that “after this life there is no place for repentance; no effect of satisfaction.” Hornius wittily observes, that by prayers for the dead, were kindled the fires of purgatory, at which the fat monks warmed themselves.

he walked with him in the same manner to the door of the mansion house.

About the same time\* he was solicited to become bishop of Tours ; but as he could not be easily induced to leave his monastery, Ruricius, a citizen of Tours, under the pretence that his wife was ill, fell at his knees and moved him by his entreaties to go. Crowds of the citizens were so placed along the road, that he was conducted as by a guard all the way to the city. An incredible multitude had assembled, not only out of the city, but also out of the neighboring towns to give their suffrages.† There was but one sentiment among them ; all joined in expressing by their votes the sentiment that Martin was most worthy of the episcopal office, and that the church would be happy under such a pastor. A few private individuals, however, and some of the bishops who were called to consecrate the new bishop, impiously resisted,—alleging that he was a contemptible person, unworthy of the bishop's office—of a mean countenance, dirty clothing, and shaggy hair.

By people of sound mind this madness of theirs was derided ; for in attempting to specify faults, they only proclaimed the merits‡ of the illustrious man. Nor was it permitted to these

\* Gregory of Tours, who was bishop of this city about 200 years later, says, that St. Martin died at the age of 81 years, after he had been bishop 26 years. This would make him 55 years old at this time. But Ghiselin, in a note on this passage, shows that he was probably not more than 33 years of age when he was made bishop. This was between the years 370 and 375.

† From this passage, we see that the primitive custom of electing bishops and pastors, by popular suffrage, was still in use. The higher clergy gradually usurped this power ; the priests electing the bishop, and the bishops the archbishop, &c. Finally, the Pope of Rome claimed the sole right of investiture, that is, of investing bishops with their office ; which, as it was the power of a *veto* at all elections, became virtually, the power of appointment.

The city of Tours was on the river Loire, about 70 miles north of Poitiers, where Martin lived.

‡ Merits ! Yes, we see what sorts of things were esteemed merits in

opposers to do anything but what the people, by the will of God, compelled them to do. Among the bishops present, one named Defender is said to have resisted: and it was observed that he was severely reproved in the lesson read from the prophets [on the day of Martin's ordination]; for it so happened that the reader whose duty it was to officiate on that day, had been prevented from attending in his place by the throng of people in the church. Some disorder arising while they waited for the reader, one of the ministers took up the psalter and began to read at the first verse that presented itself. The psalm was, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise by reason of thine enemies, that thou mightest destroy the enemy and the defender;"\* at the reading of which the people raised a shout, and the opposite party were confounded. And so it was by Divine suggestion that this should be read, that Defender might hear a testimony of his wickedness; because the praise of the Lord having been perfected in Martin, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, the enemy was likewise both pointed out and destroyed.

So assuming the bishop's office, he discharged its duties in a the saints of those days—a mean look, dirty, stinking clothes, and tangled, filthy, *populous* hair, standing out on every side, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." The odor which these monkish saints diffused through the surrounding air, was deemed by their admirers to be the very odor of sanctity. Only think of an unwashed saint who never changed his garments, who lay in the dirt, who deemed any sort of personal cleanliness unholy! Even the great Jerome (Epis. ad Rusticum), said, "Dirty clothes are the signs of a pure mind. A ragged coat proves a holy contempt of the world." If the most learned of the Fathers taught such a sentiment, can you wonder that they who were ambitious of the reputation of sanctity, were as filthy as swine, and as odoriferous as he-goats, and that the ignorant multitude imagined that St. Martin was a great miracle-worker, because he was the nastiest of saints?

\* Psalm viii. 3. In our Bible the word is "avenger," as it ought to be. The reading here given is that of the old Roman Psalter, which may be found in Jerome's works in parallel columns with another called the Gallican. Jerome corrected the translation of this Psalter, so that the Vulgate has the true sense.



manner and with an ability far beyond my power of description. He persevered in being what he had been before. He had the same humility of heart, the same meanness of apparel ; and being full of authority and grace, he so filled the episcopal dignity as not to desert the purpose and virtue of a monk. For some time, therefore, he used a cell adjoining the church : then, unable to bear the disturbance of frequent visitors, he established for himself a monastery about two miles from the city, in a place so secluded and retired as to resemble the solitude of a desert : For on the one side it was bounded by the steep and lofty precipices of a mountain, and on the other side a space of level ground was enclosed by a bend of the river Loire. There was but one way of access to it, and that very narrow. He had his own cell constructed of wood ; many of the brethren built theirs in the same way ; but most of them dug receptacles for themselves in the rock of the mountain side. The disciples were eighty in number, and were trained\* according to the example of their blessed master. For no one there had any private property ; all things were thrown into a common stock. No selling or buying was permitted, as is customary with other monks. No art was cultivated there except the art of writing : that business was, however, deputed to the junior disciples : the elder members of the community did nothing but pray.† Rarely did any one go out of his cell, except when they assembled at the place of prayer. All took food together after the hour of fasting : wine was un-

\* The primitive monasteries of the Cenobite class were schools of religion and seminaries like this one of Martin's for training young men for the ministry. But nothing that deserves the name of learning was taught in these schools of the monks. Writing—probably copying the Scriptures and books of devotion, especially legends of monkish saints, after they came to be written—seemed to be the highest literary employment in these early monastic schools.

† Here we see the prevalent notion of religion. Prayer—a highly important duty of religion, yet only one out of many, and rather a means than an end—is made the business of life, and the substitute for the active duties which it was designed to regulate and to animate.

known among them, except as a medicine in sickness. Most of them were clothed in camel's hair; a softer garment was there esteemed a crime, and what made this the more wonderful is, that many among them were of noble families, and had been far differently educated, but who coerced themselves into this humility and patience. We have seen most of these subsequently become bishops; for what city or church could do otherwise, than desire to have pastors from the monastery of Martin?

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## CHAPTER IV.

Miracles: the Robber's Ghost; the Pine Tree, the Destruction of Pagan Temples.

BUT to come to the other miracles which he did while bishop:—There was, not far from the city, and hard by the monastery, a place which the false opinion of men had consecrated, because martyrs were supposed to have been buried there; for an altar had been built there by former bishops. But Martin, cautious of committing his faith to uncertainties, demanded to know of the older priests and other clergy, the name of the martyr, and the time when he suffered; and he had no small scruple, when he found that the memory of the old men afforded nothing certain or consistent. Having, therefore, kept away from the place for some time, not intending to derogate from religion—for he was uncertain—nor accommodating his authority to the vulgar, lest superstition should be strengthened;—on a certain day he took a few of the brethren with him. Then standing on the sepulchre itself, he prayed the Lord to show what the person was, and what his character, who had been buried there. Then turning to the left, he saw there a ghost, sordid and fierce. He commanded him to declare his name and character. The ghost tells his name, and confesses his guilt in having been a robber who was executed for his crime; and though now celebrated by a vulgar error, having in fact nothing in common with martyrs, since they were in glory,

he in punishment. They who were present heard a strange voice, as of one speaking, but saw no person. Then Martin declared what he had seen, and commanded the altar which was there to be removed. So he delivered the people from the error of that superstition.\*

He happened afterwards to meet the corpse of a pagan, which was being carried to sepulture with superstitious ceremonies. When he espied afar off the coming multitude, he stopped a little, not knowing what it was ; for at the distance of more than half a mile, he could not well distinguish what he saw : however, as he discerned a band of rustics, and the cloths that were spread over the corpse fluttering in the wind, he believed that some profane rites were going on ; for it was the custom of the Gallic peasants, in their miserable madness, to carry about through the fields the images of demons [their gods] covered with a white veil. Therefore, lifting up the crucifix against them, he commanded the crowd not to move from the place, but to lay down their burden. Now you might wonder to see the wretches first become rigid as rocks ;—then, in striving to proceed, instead of advancing, whirling round ridiculously, until overcome by the weight of the corpse they laid it down. Astonished, and looking at one another, they thought silently on what had happened to them. But the blessed man, when he discovered that it was the procession of a funeral, and not of an idol, again raised his hand, and gave them the power of taking up the corpse and proceeding on their way. So, according to his will, he both compelled them to stop and permitted them to proceed.†

Likewise in a certain village, after he had torn down a very ancient temple, he proceeded to cut down a pine tree close by the

\* May we not venture to suggest, that the true reason why St. Martin wished to have this tomb out of the way, was not the fear of encouraging popular superstition, but because the tomb attracted crowds of superstitious visitors to the side of his monastery, and disturbed its retirement ? He could easily manage the miracle of the ghost, to get rid of an annoyance.

† This was a ludicrous miracle altogether ; ludicrous in the scene presented, and not less ludicrous in its origin—a *mistake* of the miracle-worker !

temple. Then the priest of the place and the Pagan populace, began to resist. As they had been very quiet while the temple, by Divine command, was being pulled down, but opposed the destruction of the tree, he took pains to show them that there could be nothing religious in the stem of a tree ; that they ought rather to follow the God whom he adored ; and that the tree ought to be cut down, because it was dedicated to a demon. Then one of them, who was bolder than the rest, said, " If thou hast any confidence in the God whom thou professest to worship, then let us cut this tree down, and do thou catch it when it is falling ; and if the Lord be with thee as thou sayest, thou wilt escape." Then he, intrepidly confiding in the Lord, promised so to do. The whole multitude of the Pagans consented to the condition, estimating that the loss of the tree would be well repaid, if by its fall they could crush the enemy of their sacrifices. Therefore, as the tree leaned to one side, so that when cut, it would certainly fall in that direction, he was bound by the rustics, and put in the very place where everybody believed that the tree would fall. Then they began with exulting joy to cut down their own tree. The crowd of wondering spectators stood at a distance. Presently the pine begins to nod, and to threaten his destruction by its fall. The monks at a distance grew pale ; and their terror increasing as the danger approached, they lost all hope, looking only for the death of Martin. But he waited with intrepid confidence in the Lord, until the falling pine cracked, and came rushing down upon him. He raised his hand, and held up against it the sign of salvation [that is, the crucifix]. Then, as if by some reaction, the tree whirled round, like a top, and fell in another place, so as to come near crushing the rustics, who stood apparently out of danger. Then indeed, with a shout that reached the sky, the Pagans expressed their astonishment, while the monks wept for joy. All joined in acknowledging the power of Christ ; and on that day, salvation evidently came to that region : for among the multitude of Pagans, there was scarcely one who did not request the im-

sition of hands,\* and believe on the Lord Jesus, while he renounced his impious error : and indeed, before Martin's time, very few—in fact, almost none—had received the name of Christ ; —which has gained such strength by his miracles and example, that now every place is supplied with churches and monasteries ; for wherever he destroyed a temple, there he built immediately a church or a monastery.†

About the same time, whilst engaged in the same business, he exhibited a miracle not inferior to the other. In a certain village he had set fire to a very old temple, and the wind was driving the flames upon an adjoining house ; when Martin, observing the circumstance, climbed hastily upon the roof of the house, and presented himself to the approaching flames. Then, with wonder, might you have seen the fire thrown back against the wind, and the contending elements appearing to be in conflict. By the power of Martin, the fire was prevented from doing more than what it was ordered to do.

In a village called the Leprous Village, when he wished to destroy a temple that had been enriched by superstition, he was repulsed, with bodily injury, by a multitude of Pagans. Therefore he withdrew to a place in the vicinity, where during three days, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, he fasted and prayed unto the Lord, that as that temple could not be destroyed by human hands, it might be subverted by Divine power. Then suddenly two angels, armed with spear and shield, like soldiers of heaven,

\* This imposition of hands was the form by which they were received as catechumens, preparatory to baptism.

† This passage shows how bishops converted pagans to Christianity in those days. After the Church got the temporal power on her side, she turned round and began to persecute those who had persecuted her, though not in so bloody a manner. Bishops, at the head of mobs, attacked and destroyed the heathen temples, and every tangible thing consecrated to the heathen Gods ; and having thus put a stop to heathen worship, they planted churches and monasteries in the same places, where, by the adoption of many heathen rites and heathen festivals, only changing some names, they presented to heathen eyes a religion in its essentials a good deal like their own.

presented themselves, and said that they had been sent by the Lord to drive away that Pagan multitude, and to protect him whilst the temple should be torn down; that he should return, therefore, and finish the work which he had devoutly undertaken. So he returned to the village, and whilst the Pagan multitude looked on quietly, he tore down the profane edifice, to its very foundations, and pounded the altars and images to dust.\* At the sight of this the rustics knew that they were frightened by Divine power, and were thus prevented from resisting the bishop; therefore they nearly all believed in the Lord, publicly confessing with a loud voice, that the God of Martin should be worshipped, and that the idols, which could not help them, should be cast away.

I will relate also what occurred in a village of the Edui,† where, as he was in like manner throwing down a temple, a furious crowd of Pagan rustics assailed him. When one, bolder than the rest, drew his sword and made at him; he threw back his cloak and offered his bare neck to the assailant; the Pagan did not hesitate to lift his sword to strike: but in the act of raising his hand, he fell backwards upon the ground. Terrified by a Divine fear, he then prayed for pardon.

Similar to this was another case. When he was destroying an idol's temple, a man aimed a stroke at him with a butcher's axe; but when he was in the act of striking, the weapon flew out of his hand and disappeared. But in most instances, when the peasants opposed him in his work of destroying their temples, he

\* These violent doings were doubtless attempted to be justified by the examples of Hezekiah and Josiah, reforming kings of Judea, who thus treated the idolatrous images that had usurped the holy places. By a similar abuse of Old Testament examples, every sort of enormity might as well be justified as this.

† The Edui, or Hedui, were a numerous tribe of Celtic Gauls who inhabited the central parts of Gaul, upon the waters of the Loire, eastward from Tours.

When the Romans conquered Gaul they sent colonies into the country, who composed the chief inhabitants of the cities; while the native Gauls still constituted the mass of the peasantry, who retained their old heathen superstition long after the cities had been Christianized.

softened their Pagan hearts to such a degree, by his holy preaching, that, the light of truth entering their minds, they overthrew their temples with their own hands.\*

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## CHAPTER V.

### Martin Heals the Sick and Casts out Demons.

THE gift of healing was so mighty in him, that almost no sick person came to him without being almost immediately restored to health; of which the following example will afford an illustration:

A girl at Treves† was dreadfully afflicted with palsy, insomuch that for a long time she could make no use of her limbs, and was wholly dead, except a slight motion in breathing. Her sorrowing friends were standing by her in constant expectation of her decease; when suddenly it was announced that Martin had arrived in the city. When the father heard it, he ran to beg for his lifeless daughter. Martin happened to be just entering the church, when, in the presence of the congregation and of several other bishops, the weeping father embraced his knees, saying, "My daughter is dying of a pitiable languor, worse than death; because, while her flesh is already dead, her spirit is reduced to mere breathing. I entreat you to go and bless her; for I trust that by you she is to be restored to health."

Astonished at the man's words, he refused, saying that this was not within his power; that the old man was in an error; for he was not a person whom the Lord would esteem worthy of performing such miracles. The father persisted the more vehemently in beseeching him with tears, that he would visit the dead. Finally, being urged by the bishops present, he went down to the

\* How much better and more Christian it would have been for this zealous monk-bishop to use none but those spiritual weapons for the conversion of his heathen neighbors!

† A city on the river Moselle, far north of Tours. Martin seems to have gone to a meeting of bishops there, on some affair of the Church.

girl's house. A great multitude waited before the door, to see what the servant of God would do. And first he fell upon the ground and prayed. Then looking upon the sufferer, he called for some oil; and having blessed it, he poured a quantity of the consecrated liquor into the girl's mouth, and immediately her voice was restored to her. Then her limbs, one after another, revived at the touch of the oil, until she arose and walked with firm steps in the sight of the people.

At the same time, a servant of one Tetradius, a man of consular dignity, was wofully tormented by a demon. Therefore, Martin was requested to lay his hands on him. He ordered that the servant should be brought to him. But the evil spirit could in no way be drawn out of the cell which he occupied; so furiously did he bite all who approached him. Then Tetradius himself falls at the feet of the blessed man, and begs that he would himself go down to the house where the demoniac was. Martin answered, that he could not go to the house of a profane Gentile; for Tetradius was still at this time involved in the error of Paganism. Then he promised that if the demon was expelled from the boy, he would become a Christian. Then Martin laid his hand on the boy, and cast out the unclean spirit; at the sight of which Tetradius believed in the Lord Jesus—became a catechumen—was baptized not long afterwards, and always regarded Martin with the highest veneration as the author of his salvation.

About the same time, on entering the door of a citizen of the same town, he stopped at the threshold, saying that he saw a horrible demon in the hall. The demon, when Martin commanded him to be gone, took possession of a servant who was on duty in the house. The wretch began immediately to gnash his teeth, and to bite at all that came in his way. The whole family were soon thrown into disturbance, and the people were forced to flee. Martin went to him, and in the first place commanded him to stand still; but when he gnashed his teeth, and threatened to bite, Martin put his fingers into his mouth. "If you have the



power (said he), devour these.” As if he had taken a red-hot iron into his jaws, he gaped to the utmost stretch, that he might avoid touching the fingers of the blessed man ; and as he was compelled by tortures to quit the body that he possessed, and was debarred from issuing at the mouth, he turned downwards, and forced his way through by that route, carrying with him certain very unsavory demonstrations of his exit.\*

During Martin’s stay in Treves, the city was troubled by a rumor, that the barbarians intended to make an irruption.† Martin ordered a demoniac to be brought to him ; which being done, he commanded him to confess whether the report was true. Then he confessed, that sixteen demons had conspired to spread the report through the city, in the hope of thus frightening Martin away : he added that the barbarians thought of nothing less than of making an irruption. So when the unclean spirit had made this confession in the midst of the church, the city was freed from the present fear and disturbance.

At Paris, while he was entering the gate of the city, to the horror of all, he kissed a leper and gave him his blessing,

\* As we have used some circumlocution in giving the sense of this curious passage, we give the original words : *Cum fugere de obsesso corpore poenis et cruciatibus cogereetur, nec tamen exire ei per os liceret, foeda relinquens vestigia, fluxu ventris egestus est.* The current notion seems to have been, at this time, that evil spirits could not penetrate a man’s flesh and skin, but had to enter and leave by some natural orifice of the body. They naturally preferred the mouth, for a reason that we, if we were in their place, would readily appreciate. And yet if they could not pass through the small pores of the body, as its fluids can, they must, notwithstanding their spiritual nature, be made of coarser stuff than the fluids that circulate through all parts of the human system. And then, if they require as large an opening as the throat to afford them a passage, it would appear that they can take possession only of the stomach and the channels through which the food passes, and might be worked out by a strong purgative ! We submit the case to the physiologists and believers in monkish miracles.

† Treves being near the Roman frontier next to Germany, was liable to suffer from incursions of the barbarians living beyond the Rhine. Not long afterwards the northern tribes did break through and ravage the empire on this side.

though the man's face was deformed by the disease. The leper was instantly cleansed ; and on the next day came to the church with a clear skin, to give thanks for his cure.

Nor must we forget to mention that shreds plucked from the hem of his upper garment, and from his camel's hair shirt, wrought frequent miracles upon the sick ; for if these things were tied to the fingers or on the neck of the patient, they often expelled the disease.

But Arborius, a prefect (or magistrate), a holy man and full of faith, had a daughter reduced to a low condition by a grievous quartan fever. By chance a letter of Martin's had been brought to him. He laid this on the girl's breast, at the time when the fever was to come on, and the fever was forthwith expelled. The circumstance had such an effect on Arborius, that he immediately devoted himself to God, and consecrated his daughter to perpetual virginity. He went and showed the girl to Martin, as a present testimony of the miracle by which he though absent had cured her, nor would he have any one but Martin to consecrate her, by clothing her with the robes of virginity.\*

Paullinus, a man afterwards eminent for his virtues, had a grievous disease in one of his eyes, the pupil of which was covered with a thick film. Martin touched it with his cloak and perfectly removed the disease.

He himself, by some accident, fell down the rough steps that led to the refectory of the monastery, and received many severe bruises. While he lay almost dead in his cell, tormented with pains, an angel was seen in the night, washing his wounds and anointing his bruised members with healing salve ; so on the next

\* We mentioned formerly, that in the second century and afterwards, virgins who consecrated themselves to God in many instances lived privately in the houses of their kindred. This was still common, though virgin houses or nunneries had been before now established for those who chose to live in them. These private virgins, if wealthy, often had a train of servants to attend on them. The custom had before now arisen of consecrating these virgins by a priest, who blessed them and put a white robe on them in token of their profession.

day he was quite restored, and might be supposed never to have sustained the least hurt.

But it would take a long time to detail all his miracles. Let these few out of a great many suffice. Be it enough that in excellent things we detract nothing from the truth, and in a multitude of things, we avoid a tedious detail.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Martin Dines with the Emperor Maximus. How the Devil vainly Tried to Impose on Him.

BUT among the great things, let me insert some of inferior dignity; though amidst the corruption of these degenerate days, it is an act of almost the highest merits, for sacerdotal constancy not to degrade itself by flattering the pride of kings.

When many bishops from divers parts came to visit the Emperor Maximus—a man of ferocious temper and proud of his victory in the civil wars—all were noted for base adulation to the prince; and lowered the sacerdotal dignity, by stooping with degenerate want of courage to behave as dependants on an emperor. By Martin alone was the apostolical authority maintained: For though he had petitions to offer in favor of several persons, he assumed the style of command rather than of request.\* He also declined repeated invitations to dinner, saying that he could not eat with a man who had dethroned one emperor and killed another.

\* There is a dignity of the clerical office which should always be maintained; yet the bearing of Martin, and the praise of it by his biographer, show that priestly arrogance and pride had already made considerable progress in the Church. Martin acted well in refusing at first to dine with the emperor, on account of his crimes. That was morally dignified; but the rest of his conduct shows, that under his external dirtiness and humility, there was covered no small share of spiritual pride. The clergy in this age had already begun to claim exemption from the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate, and to put on the airs of an independent power in the State. It was not, however, until popery was matured, that they became wholly independent.

Finally, when Maximus declared that he had not voluntarily assumed the imperial dignity ; but that having been compelled by the army to assume it, he had yielded to the Divine will, and defended the crown which necessity had imposed on him, that God had evidently favored his right to it by giving him so extraordinary a victory, and that none of his adversaries had been slain except in the field of battle :—at length Martin was overcome, either by his reasons or by his solicitations, and came to dine with the emperor, who was wonderfully delighted with having obtained his company. As if it had been a feast day, the most illustrious guests were invited upon the occasion ; among whom were some prefects, and likewise the consul Evodius—than whom a juster man never lived—besides two counts of the highest rank, the one a brother, and the other an uncle of the emperor. Martin's presbyter\* sat between these ; Martin himself occupied a seat next to the emperor.

About the middle of the feast, a servant, according to custom, presented a goblet of wine to the emperor, who ordered it to be given first to the holy bishop, expecting and wishing himself to receive it from the bishop's hand. But Martin, after drinking, gave the cup to his presbyter, esteeming no one more worthy to drink next after himself ; nor did he think it would become him to prefer the emperor or any of those near the emperor to his priest ;\* which the emperor and all the company so admired, that they were pleased with the contempt thrown upon themselves. It was soon noised through the palace, that Martin had done at the emperor's table, what no other bishop would have done at the table of the lowest magistrate.

He had long before predicted to the same Maximus, that if he should go to Italy, into which he was then desirous of marching, that he might attack the Emperor Valentinian ; he would at first

\* The presbyter, priest, or elder (which all mean the same thing), was next in order to the bishop, and assisted him in preaching and administering the sacraments. Martin was evidently a *lion* at court, and excited much curiosity, both on account of his monkish uncleanness and his rumored power of working miracles.

be victorious, but would soon afterwards perish ; and so we have seen it come to pass. For on his arrival in Italy, he routed Valentinian ; but this emperor, about a year afterwards, recovered strength ; and having taken Maximus prisoner within the walls of Aquileia, he put him to death.\*

It is known too that angels often visited St. Martin, and held conversations with him. He kept the devil, too, so clearly and distinctly under his eye, that the fiend, whether he retained his proper shape or assumed various disguises, could not hide himself from the view of Martin. The Devil when he found that none of his tricks could impose upon Martin's discernment, often assailed him with scolding and raillery.

Once upon a time, he burst into Martin's apartment with a loud yell, carrying a bloody horn of an ox in his hand. He pointed exultingly to the blood on his hand, as evidence of his crime, and exclaimed : " Now Martin, where is your skill in prophecy and miracles ? I have just murdered one of your people." Martin called the brethren together, and told them what the Devil had intimated. He ordered them to inquire at every cell, and discover who had suffered this misfortune. They reported that none of the monks were missing, but that a hired peasant† had gone into the forest to fetch wood. He commanded that some of them should go out and meet him. They went accordingly, and found him not far from the monastery, almost dead, yet able with his last breath to tell the brethren how he

\* Aquileia, a city of Italy, near the head of the Adriatic gulf. This Emperor Maximus reigned over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, from the year 383 till the year 388, when he invaded Italy, where the Emperor Valentinian was reigning, and by whom he was taken and put to death. He kept his court at Treves, in Gaul, where St. Martin made him several visits. In the second of the following dialogues, the reader will find more of these visits.

† It is from incidental facts like this, dropped here and there, that we learn about these ancient monks and monasteries, what their historians do not mean to tell us. The brethren in Martin's monastery did no work. A hired man supplied them with wood from a neighboring forest. These eighty men were therefore supplied with everything by the labouring population near them.

had happened to get the mortal wound ; namely, that while he was gathering up the loose reins of the oxen yoked in the wagon, one of the oxen, with a toss of his head, thrust a horn into his bowels. Soon after he related this he expired. So you see with what design the Lord permitted the Devil to give this notice to Martin : to whom, not in this case only, but in many others, wonderful premonitions were given, and then he foretold events to the brethren long before they happened.

Many a time the Devil tried a thousand mischievous tricks upon the holy man. One while he would personate Jupiter,—more frequently Mercury,—often he presented himself with the countenance of Venus and Minerva. But Martin always met him with an undaunted spirit, and protected himself with the sign of the cross and the weapon of prayer. Many a time, too, a whole crowd of imps was heard chattering against him in the most saucy and abusive terms. But knowing their invectives to be all false and harmless, he treated their railings with contempt. Some of the brethren testified also, that they had heard a demon demanding of him, in a tone of insult, why he had received again into his monastery some brethren who had lost the benefit of their baptism\* by divers offences, of which the evil spirit gave a particular account. Martin answered firmly, in opposition to the Devil, that old transgressions were purged away by reformation of life, and that those who ceased from sinning, had their sins pardoned through the Divine mercy. But the Devil contradicted him, alleging that criminals had no right to pardon, and that they who once fell, could not hope in the Lord's mercy. Then Martin is said to have exclaimed, “ If even thou, O wretch ! wouldst desist from persecuting mankind, and wouldst, even now, when the day of judgment is near† repent of thy deeds, I would, trusting in the

\* As baptism was supposed in these times to wash away all past sins, and as this remedy for sin could not be repeated, those who sinned after baptism were said to lose the benefits of that rite, and had to apply to other means of remission.

† It was a prevalent opinion in those days, that the day of judgment would come 6000 years after the Creation, and that the time was not distant.

Lord, promise thee the mercy of Christ." O what a holy presumption upon the goodness of God, was this of St. Martin ! For though he had no authority to make such a declaration, yet he showed thereby the benevolence of his heart.\*

Whilst we are speaking of the Devil and his arts it seems to be not improper to relate an occurrence of a different sort, in which the miraculous power of Martin had a share. And that which was worthy of miraculous interposition, deserves to be recorded as an admonitory example, in case that a similar deception should be attempted again.

There was a young nobleman named Clarus, afterwards a priest, now by a happy death among the blessed, who, after he had left all and come to Martin, soon attained to the most eminent faith and virtue. Then having pitched for himself a tent near the bishop's monastery, many brethren came and took up their abode with him. Among the rest came a young man named Anatolius, under the hypocritical profession of all the humility and innocence of a monk. After he had dwelt for some time in the community, he began to say that angels were wont to converse with him. No one believing him at first, he persuaded most of them by certain signs to credit his pretension. Finally, he went so far as to affirm that angels acted as messengers between him and God, and he wished to pass himself off for one of the prophets. But Clarus could by no means be convinced of the truth of his pretensions. The man threatened him with the future wrath and present judgments of God, for not believing him to be a true saint. At last he is said to have broken out in this exclamation—"Lo ! this night will the Lord give me from heaven a bright robe, clothed in which I will keep you company ; and that shall be a sign unto you that I am the power of God, when I am invested with the robe of God."

This announcement excited high expectations in the minds of all.

\* Severus turns even the errors of St. Martin to his praise. Origen was the only one of the Fathers who thought the fallen angels might be saved, and he was not steady in that unscriptural opinion.

So about midnight, it seemed by the hum of the multitude, that the whole monastery had been moved out of its place. In the cell occupied by the young man, you might see the glitter of numerous lamps ; and there were heard within it the bustle of many people running about, and the murmur of many voices. Then, all being silent, he came forth, and called to him a brother named Sabbatius, and showed him what a robe he was dressed in. This brother, being struck with amazement, called the rest. Clarus also ran forward, and having called for a light, he and all the company inspected the dress. It was of the most delicate softness, of glittering white and splendid purple, and no one could tell the material of which it was made ; yet to the most searching eye and to the closest touch, it seemed to be no other than a real garment. Meanwhile Clarus advised the brethren to fall down and pray the Lord to show them more clearly what it was. Consequently the rest of the night was spent in singing hymns and psalms. When daylight came, Clarus took hold of Anatolius with the design of drawing him to Martin, well knowing that no art of the Devil could deceive him. Then the wretched man began to draw back, and to cry out that he was forbidden to show himself to Martin ; and while they were pulling him along against his will, his fine dress vanished. Whence it is evident that Martin's power was such, that the Devil could not continue his optical illusion, when it was to be brought under the eyes of Martin.

It was observed that there was about the same time a young man in Spain, who, by many wonderful works, had acquired such credit as to venture on the pretension that he was Elijah the prophet ; and when many rashly admitted this pretension, he went still further, and pretended that he was Christ ; and so delusive was his conduct, that a bishop named Rufus, worshipped him as the Lord ; for which we have seen him subsequently deposed from the episcopal office.

Many brethren have told us, too, that at the same time a man arose in the East, who gave out that he was the Apostle John. From the appearance of so many false prophets, we may con-  
jec-



ture the approach of Antichrist, who now works in them the mystery of iniquity.

Nor should we omit to mention with what art the devil tempted Martin in those days. For one day shedding around himself a purple splendor, clothed also in a royal robe, crowned with a diadem of gold and jewels, wearing golden slippers, with a serene aspect and smiling face, so as to appear anything rather than the Devil, he stood before Martin when he was at prayer in his cell. Martin was at first dazzled at the sight, and both of them kept silence for a considerable time. Then the Devil began by saying—"O Martin! learn who is before you; I am Christ; being about to descend upon the earth, I have resolved first to manifest myself to you." When Martin made no answer to this declaration, the Devil had the audacity to repeat it; "Martin, why do you hesitate to believe what you see? I am Christ." Then the spirit revealed to Martin that it was the Devil, not God; and he said—"The Lord Jesus did not foretell that he would come clothed in purple and with a glittering crown. I will not believe that Christ has come in any other dress than that in which he suffered, and bearing the marks of his cross." At these words the evil spirit vanished like smoke, and filled the cell with such a stench, as to afford indubitable evidence that he was the Devil. Lest any one should think this story to be fabulous, I aver that I heard from Martin's own mouth the circumstances as I have related them.\*

\* When the testimony to a fact is so direct, it is hard to discredit it altogether, and yet believe that the witnesses have any truth or honesty in them. This splendid vision of the Devil may have been created by a monk's excited imagination. Those who live in the real, busy world, have little conception of the degree to which the brooding fancy of a recluse, ever intensely meditating on heaven, hell, and the evil spirits that he supposes to haunt him, may be excited. To him realities are dreams, and dreams are realities.

## CHAPTER VII.

Sulpicius Relates how He Became Acquainted with Martin.—His Enconium on the Saint.—Asseverates the Truth of His History, and Concludes

FOR long since, when we [the author] heard of his faith, his manner of life and his miracles, we were inflamed with the desire of being acquainted with him, and undertook a pleasant journey for the purpose of making him a visit. And because we had already felt an ardent wish to write his life, we inquired of himself respecting all matters, on which we could take the liberty of interrogating him. The rest of our information we obtained from those who had been present or knew the facts. He received me with incredible humility and kindness, and expressed the highest joy and gratitude to the Lord, that we esteemed him so much as to take a journey for the purpose of seeing him. Wretch that I am!—I hardly dare confess it:—when he deigned to admit me to his holy entertainment, he himself gave me water to wash my hands, and in the evening himself washed my feet; nor had I courage to make any opposition to this; for I was so subdued by his authority, that I deemed it unlawful not to acquiesce. For the whole subject of our conversation was the duty of leaving the snares and burdens of the world, that we might follow the Lord Jesus freely and without incumbrance. He adduced the example of the illustrious Paulinus,\* of whom we formerly made mention,—as the best which these times afforded; who cast away all his great riches and followed Christ, being almost the only man who in these days fulfilled the precepts of the Gospel. “Let us follow him—he exclaimed;—let us imitate his example. Happy is the present age to have before it an example of so much faith

\* Bishop of Treves, and mentioned by Severus in his church history, and also in the fifth chapter of this work, where mention is made of Martin’s having healed his eye.

and virtue : since in obedience to the Lord's will, though rich and having great possessions, he sold all and gave it to the poor ; thus evincing by his own example the possibility of doing what is impossible." Matt. xix. 24.

How grave, now ! how dignified, his language and conversation ! How lively ! how forcible ! how prompt and easy ! his solution of Scriptural questions. And as I know that many are incredulous on this point : for I have seen some who did not believe what I told them about it :—I call Jesus Christ to witness ; I stake my salvation on the truth of the assertion ;\*—I never heard from any man's mouth so much knowledge, so much skilful interpretation, so much good and pure instruction. Yet how small a matter is this commendation of Martin, when compared with his miracles ! Only it seems strange, that an illiterate man should not be deficient even in this qualification.

But now this book has reached a sufficient length, and I must close my narrative ; not for the want of facts worthy of relation ; but because, like lazy poets, becoming fatigued towards the end of our work, we feel oppressed and overcome by the magnitude of our subject ; for though we might somehow describe the actions of Martin ; yet I seriously declare that no language can do justice to his private life, and his mind ever intent on heaven ; his patient steadfastness especially, and his self-denial in abstinence and fasting, and his power in watching and praying, by night as well as by day ; for no hour of his life did he take from the work of God, for the sake of either indolent repose or worldly business.† He neither ate nor slept more than necessity required.

\* Such hard swearing about such a matter, shows a strong and general disbelief of Martin's qualifications to expound the Scriptures. Severus admits that his hero was illiterate. The whole history of his life tends to show that this wonder-worker was in fact a well-meaning, but a very ignorant enthusiast.

† Here we see the fundamental errors of the monastic system of religion : first, the notion heretofore so often mentioned, that the body and all its pleasures are evil ; and secondly, that prayer, fasting, and their concomitants, are

I declare truly, that if old Homer himself were to rise from the dead, he could not do justice to this subject ; so much above the power of language are the merits of St. Martin. Not an hour nor even a minute passed, in which he was not engaged in prayers, or, if otherwise employed, he suffered not his mind to relax from its devotional frame. As blacksmiths are accustomed in the intervals of labor, to beat the anvil for recreation, so Martin, even while he seemed to be doing something else, was still secretly praying. Happy man, in whom was no guile ! Judging nobody, condemning nobody, rendering to none evil for evil ! For he had attained such a degree of patience under injuries, that although he was the chief priest in his diocese, yet he might be injured with impunity by the lowest of the clergy ; nor did he ever on that account remove them from their places, nor cease to treat them with all possible kindness. No one ever saw him angry, or disturbed, or sorrowful, or laughing. Always one and the same, bearing in his countenance a sort of heavenly cheerfulness, he seemed to have risen above the weaknesses of human nature. There was nothing in his mouth but Christ ; nothing in his heart but piety, peace, and compassion. For the most part also, he used to weep for the sins of his calumniators, who, with poisoned tongues and vipers' mouths, slandered him when he was at a distance and doing no harm. We have also found some who envied his miracles and his purity of life, and hated in him what they were conscious of not possessing, and what they would not imitate. And oh, lamentable depravity of man ! he had few persecutors, very few indeed, besides bishops ! We need not name any one, though several of them are barking at ourselves. Suffice it to say, that if a certain individual of them should read these remarks, and recognize himself, let him blush ; for if he be angry, he will confess himself to be the man, when per-

exclusively "the work of God," and more meritorious when they withdraw us from social duties and worldly occupations, than when they are used in conjunction with these, and as the means of regulating and sanctifying our lives.

haps we were thinking of some other. But if there be such men, we are willing to share their hatred with such a man as Martin.

This, however, I can readily feel assured of, that our little work will please all the saints.\* As for the rest; if any one read this work without believing it, he will sin. I am conscious that I have, under the influence of love to Christ, faithfully related well-known facts, and have adhered to the truth in all my statements: and I trust that he who not only reads, but believes what I have written, will meet with a ready reward from God.†

\* The monks, and those who sympathized with them, began now, it appears, to consider themselves as the only Christians deserving the title of *saints*.

† It is evident from this and other passages, that many, even among the clergy, discredited altogether the reported miracles of St. Martin.

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In a literary point of view, the foregoing Life of St. Martin is distinguished for a perspicuous and elegant simplicity. The following epistles and dialogues are written with more art and elaborate finish. The epistles are eloquently written, and the first of the dialogues is among the most beautiful specimens of easy and graceful dialogue that the translator has ever seen. And then they are so full of romantic fiction! In the artless loquacity of Athanasius, and the lively narrative of Jerome, we have good pictures of the monkish "Fathers of the Desert;" but in the beautifully-written dialogues of Severus, this curious scene in the great drama of human life is depicted with exquisite art, and charms the imagination. The third dialogue is less artfully composed than the preceding two, and is rather tiresome.

## CHAPTER XX.

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### THREE EPISTLES OF SULPICIUS SEVERUS.

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#### EPISTLE I.

TO EUSEBIUS THE PRESBYTER, AGAINST THE EMULATORS OF THE  
MIRACLES OF ST. MARTIN.

YESTERDAY, when several monks were on a visit to me, it happened, among a variety of uninteresting stories and tedious discourses, that somebody mentioned the little book that I had written on the life of St. Martin, and I was delighted to hear that many had read it with great interest. I was told, at the same time, that some evil disposed person had asked, with a sneer, Why Martin, who had raised the dead to life, and driven off the flames from a house, should have been lately scorched by fire, and have narrowly escaped with his life? Oh! the miserable wretch, whosoever he be! In his words we recognize the perfidious cavils of the Jews, who railed at the Lord on the cross, in these words: He saved others; himself he cannot save. Undoubtedly that man, whosoever he is, if he had lived in those times, could have used against the Lord the same sort of language that he has blasphemously uttered against a saint of the Lord. What then? O thou, whosoever thou art, was Martin therefore not mighty, therefore not holy, because he was endangered by a fire? O the blessed man, and like the Apostles, even in these reproaches! For instance, those Gentiles thought the same of Paul when the

viper bit him. This man (said they) must be a murderer, whom, though escaped from the sea, justice suffereth not to live. But he shook off the viper into the fire, and suffered no harm. But they supposed that he would suddenly fall down and die; and when they saw that no harm befel him, they changed their minds and said that he was a God. Now even this example ought, O most wretched of mortals, to convict you of falsehood; for if you were scandalized that Martin should seem to have been touched by a flame of fire, you should on the other hand ascribe it to his merits and miraculous power, that, when surrounded with flames, he was not burnt to death. Acknowledge then, wretch, acknowledge your ignorance, that nearly all saints have been more distinguished by their perils than their miracles. I see Peter, indeed, mighty in faith, walking contrary to the nature of things, upon the sea, and pressing the unstable waters with his feet; but to me the preacher of the Gentiles, (St. Paul) seems to be no wise inferior, when the waves swallowed him up, and after three days and nights, again caused him to emerge safely from the deep water;\* and I am not sure but that it was almost a greater miracle to have lived under the deep waters, than to have walked upon their surface. But you, I suppose, are such a fool as not to have read these things, or to have given them no heed if you had read them. Nor was it without divine direction that the holy Evangelist recorded such an example, to teach men the perils of shipwreck and of serpents; and, in like manner, the Apostle, who glories in nakedness, hunger, and perils of robbers, teaches us that saints are as liable to suffer all these things as other men are. But in bearing and overcoming these things, consists the chief merit of good men, who sustaining all their trials with patience, conquer so much the more valiantly, as they endure the more grievous sufferings. Wherefore this calamity which is

\* Sulpicius here confounds the cases of Paul and Jonas. The apostle was "a night and a day in the deep" (2 Cor. xi. 25), not sunk in the sea, but probably struggling for life in a time of storm and shipwreck; or, as some think, imprisoned in a deep dungeon underground.

attributed to Martin's weakness, is full of dignity and glory ; seeing that he was tried by a most dangerous accident and came off victorious. But no one should wonder that I said nothing of this occurrence in my little biography of Martin ; as I professed not to mention all his actions ; because if I had given a full account of his life, I must have offered my readers a volume of tedious length ; nor even then could I have comprehended all his important doings. However I will not suffer the affair under consideration to continue unknown, but give a full account of the circumstances ; that I may not seem to have unadvisedly passed over what might afford matter of reproach against the blessed man.

When Martin came about mid-winter to a certain parish,\* according to his yearly custom of visiting his churches, like other bishops, the clergy had prepared him a lodging in the vestry of the church, and had built a large fire under the thin mouldering pavement, whilst they made him a thick bed of straw upon the floor. When Martin lay down, he dreaded the unusual luxury of so soft a bed, having been accustomed to sleep on the naked ground, with a single haircloth for his covering. Therefore, as if offended at such a bed, he picked up the straw and threw it aside. He happened to have cast a heap of it directly over the furnace that was under the floor. Then, as usual, he lay down, wearied with his journey, and slept on the naked floor. Near midnight, the fire flaming up through a crevice of the pavement, soon caught the dry straw. Martin roused out of sleep, and confounded by the suddenness of the affair, the alarming danger, and chiefly (as he said) by a wily assault of the Devil, who was on the watch, resorted more tardily than he should have done, to prayer for help. For, attempting first to go out by the door, after he had tugged long and hard at the bolt without being able to draw it, he felt the fire growing very hot about him, insomuch that the garment upon him was consumed by the flames. At

\* Ad diœcesim quamdam. The term diocese here does not signify a bishop's see, but a parish under the charge of a priest.



length coming to himself and remembering that safety is not found in flight but in the Lord, seizing the shield of faith and of prayer, he kneeled down in the midst of the flames and turned his mind wholly to the Lord. Then by divine agency the fire was moved away from him, and he prayed unhurt within a globe of flames. But the monks who were before the door, alarmed by the roaring and hissing of the flames, broke the door open, and scattering the fire, rescued Martin from the midst of the flames, when it might be supposed that he would be entirely burnt up. But (as the Lord is my witness,) he told me himself, and confessed with a groan, that he was in this instance deceived by the Devil's art, so as not to think, when he first awoke, of resisting the danger by faith and prayer, and that the fire raged about him as long as he was trying in the perturbation of his mind to get the door open. But when he resorted to the help of the cross and the arms of prayer, the flames ceased in the middle, and he felt a moisture in those flames, which had previously scorched him severely. Hence the reader may understand that in this dangerous predicament, Martin was severely tried but still approved.

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EPISTLE II.

TO AURELIUS THE DEACON.

ON THE DEATH AND BEATIFICATION OF ST. MARTIN.

*Sulpicius Severus to Aurelius the Deacon, HEALTH :*

AFTER you left me in the morning, I was sitting alone in my cell, and my thoughts turned upon a subject that often occupies my mind, namely, the hope of future things, with disgust at the things of the present world—when the fear of judgment, the dread of punishment, and that which led to the whole meditation, namely, the remembrance of my sins, made me feel sad and desponding. Then, when I laid my sorrow-stricken members on my

couch, and, as often happens when one is sorrowful, I had fallen into a slumber, which is always in the morning, light, uncertain, and often so doubtful that you are almost conscious of being asleep. Then all of a sudden, methought that I saw Saint Martin, the bishop, clothed in a white robe, his countenance like a flame of fire, his eyes like stars, his hair of a purple color. Such were his form and appearance, that it is difficult to describe them—I could not look steadfastly upon him, although I could recognize his person. He smiled on me a little, and carried in his right hand the little book that I had written concerning his life. I embraced his sacred knees and asked his blessing, as I had been used to do. I felt his hand softly touch my head, whilst he uttered the customary benediction, intermingling with it the name of the cross, so familiar to his mouth. Presently, whilst I gazed with eager eyes upon his face, he was suddenly carried up on high; until I saw him at an immense distance, borne rapidly away by a cloud, until he disappeared. Not long afterwards I saw the holy presbyter Clarus, his disciple, who had lately climbed the same lofty way. I, impudently desirous to follow them, labored and strove at the sublime ascent, until I awoke. I then began to rejoice at the vision, when a servant came in with a countenance unusually sorrowful. What sad news are you going to tell me? Two monks (he answered) have arrived from Tours, and tell that Lord Martin is dead. I confess that I fell down and wept a flood of tears; and still, whilst I write to you, my brother, the tears are flowing, and my overwhelming grief admits of no consolation, and I would have you, when you hear this, share my grief as you were a partaker of my love. Come to me therefore immediately, that we may now weep together for him whom we loved alike. Although I know that we ought not to mourn for him, who after he conquered and triumphed over the world, has now received his crown of righteousness. But I cannot refrain from sorrowing. I have indeed sent my patron saint before me to heaven, but I have lost my comforter on earth. If grief were governed by reason, my sorrow would be converted into joy:

For he is now joined with the apostles and prophets, and (with leave of all the saints be it said) inferior to none of that righteous band :\* and as I assuredly believe and trust, he is numbered now with those who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb ; and free from every stain, follows the lamb as his guide ; for although the times did not admit of his being a martyr, yet he shall not want the glory of a martyr, because he had the spirit and fortitude of a martyr, and would have been one, if occasion had offered. For if he had lived in the times of Nero and Decius, and had been allowed to mingle in the strife of those days of persecution, I call to witness the God of heaven and earth, that he would of his own accord have mounted the rack, and willingly cast himself into the fire at the stake ; and like the Hebrew children, he would have sung a hymn in the midst of the flames though they had been the flames of a fiery furnace. Or if his persecutors had chosen to inflict Isaiah's punishment upon him, not a whit more than the prophet would he have feared to have his body sawn asunder : or had impious fury preferred to drive the blessed man over rocky cliffs and mountain precipices, I solemnly aver that he would have been willingly dashed in pieces : Or if, like the teacher of the Gentiles [St. Paul], he had been led forth among a crowd of victims to be beheaded, he would have compelled the executioner to let him, first of all, take the bloody palm of martyrdom. Now indeed he would have stood immovable against all the pains and tortures from which man's infirmity is apt to shrink, rather than deny the Lord : yea, he would have even rejoiced in having his flesh torn, and he would have laughed at the tortures of the rack. But although he suffered not these things, he nevertheless fulfilled a bloodless

\* Origen, Cyprian, and the Fathers generally, believed that there were higher and lower orders of saints in heaven, martyrs and virgins (male and female) constituting the highest. Martyrdom for Christ was considered the most meritorious of human acts ; yet the Fathers assign to virgins the uppermost seat in heaven. If we might refine a little, we would say that virginity and martyrdom united—and in the fourth century, monkery in addition—would exalt a saint to the very summit of celestial glory.

martyrdom : for, what human sufferings did he did not bear for the sake of eternal life—famine, watching, nakedness, fastings, the reproaches of the envious, the persecutions of the wicked, care for the feeble, anxiety for those in danger? For, who was sorrowful, and he grieved not? Who offended, and he burned not? Who was lost, and he groaned not? Besides those daily struggles of his against the wicked attempts of men and of evil spirits ; whilst amid all his temptations, he maintained a victorious fortitude, a persevering hope, and a calm patience, under his sufferings. Oh, what a man! How unspeakable his piety, his mercy, his charity!—that charity, which is daily growing colder even among saints in this age of coldness ;—but in him it grew even to the last : and I especially enjoyed the benefit of it ; since, unworthy as I was, he loved me with singular affection. Behold ! my tears flow afresh, and groans break out from my full breast. In whom shall I hereafter find such sweet repose ; in whose love shall I experience such comfort? Alas for me, helpless man ! Can I cease during life from grieving that I survived Martin ? Can I have any pleasure in my life ? A day or an hour without tears ? Or with thee, dear brother, can I ever speak of him without weeping ! Or can I ever speak to thee of anything else ? But why do I move thee to tears and groans ? My desire is to console thee, though I cannot console myself. He will still be with us ; believe me, he will : when we speak of him, he will be present : when we pray, he will stand by us. He will often show himself in his glory, as he vouchsafed to do this day ; and will always protect us with his blessing as he has heretofore done. Then according to the vision, in which he hath shown that heaven is open to those that follow him, he hath taught us to what place he is to be followed,—to what objects our hopes and exertions are to be directed. But what will you do, my brother ? For my part, I am conscious that I cannot climb that steep ascent, and pierce that lofty sky : so heavy a load weighs me down : pressed by the burden of my sins, I cannot reach the starry heights ; guilt draws me downwards

to the miseries of the infernal regions. Still a hope remains—the only, the last hope—that what I cannot obtain for myself, I may, however, gain by Martin's prayers in my behalf.\* But why should I delay your coming, by taking up your time with so long a letter? Besides, my sheet is full. However, the reason why I lengthened out this communication, was that as my letter conveyed mournful intelligence, so by holding farther discourse, it might also afford consolation.

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### EPISTLE III.

#### TO BASSULA, HIS STEPMOTHER.

HOW ST. MARTIN WAS TRANSLATED FROM THIS LIFE TO  
IMMORTALITY.

*Sulpicius Severus to Bassula, his Venerable Parent, HEALTH :*

IF parents might ever be prosecuted by their children, I could certainly drag you with justice to the tribunal of the judge, for the crime of picking and stealing. And why may I not complain of the injury you have done me? You have not left me at home a single book, letter, or scrap of writing; such clean work do you make with your thefts, so completely do you divulge all that I write. I cannot write a familiar letter; I cannot utter a few sportive sayings for the private ear of a friend—but somehow, almost before they are written, all get into your possession. Surely you have bribed my amanuenses to give you my trifles for publication. But I cannot blame them for obeying you, since it

\* Many of the superstitions that corrupted and deformed Christianity came in with monachism, and were promoted by the monks. Here we see St. Martin in heaven, recognized as an intercessor for saints on earth; as visiting them in their hours of trial, and showing himself to them in visions. Being thus constituted their patron and guardian, he would of course become an object of prayer and trust as a sort of god. This superstition was established about the year 400.

is chiefly by your liberality that I have been able to employ them ; and they know that they are still your servants rather than mine. You alone are in fault, who are watching me, and fraudulently persuading them that they may innocently deliver to you my unstudied and uncorrected writings, carelessly composed for my friends.

For, to say nothing of the rest, I ask how it happened, that the letter which I lately wrote to Aurelius, the deacon, could reach you so quickly ? For when I was located at Toulouse, and you were settled at Treves, so far from your son, what opportunity had you to steal that letter ? For I have received letters from you, in which you say that I ought to have described the translation of Martin in the same letter in which I mentioned his death ; as if I had intended that letter for any one except the person to whom it was addressed ; or were bound, when I wrote, to know and to relate everything concerning Martin. Therefore, if you desire to hear the particulars of his death, learn them rather of those who were present. I am resolved to write you nothing lest you publish it abroad. Nevertheless, if you will promise not to read this letter to anybody, I will briefly satisfy your curiosity ; so I will communicate to you the following facts that have come to my knowledge :

Well then, Martin had long foreknown the time of his decease, and told his brethren that it was drawing near. At this time he had occasion to visit the parish of Condata, to settle a dispute among the clergy of that church ; and he resolved to go, although he knew that the end of his days was at hand ; deeming this a good consummation of his works, to restore peace to a distracted church. So departing with his usual retinue of holy disciples, he observed some cormorants in the river, catching fish, and intent on stuffing their greedy maws with their prey. There, said he, you have a representation of demons, watching the unwary and seizing the ignorant ; devouring such as they take, and never satisfied with prey. Then he commands with mighty words, that they should quit the deep water, where they were swimming, and

fly to arid deserts ; using with these birds the power by which he was accustomed to drive away demons. So the birds collecting themselves into a flock left the river, and sought the woods and mountains ; to the admiration of many who saw that Martin had power to command the birds also.

Having abode awhile in the village, or in the church that he had visited, he made peace among the clergy, and was thinking to return to his monastery, when his bodily strength failed him suddenly. He called his disciples together, and told them that he was dying. Then all began to wail and lament, and to cry out—"Father, why do you desert us ? To whom will you leave us in our desolation ? Greedy wolves will invade your flock ; and who will rescue us from their jaws, when our shepherd is smitten ? We know that you desire to be with Christ ; but your reward is sure ; it will not grow less by delay ; pity us whom you are deserting." Then he, affected by their tears, as he always melted with pity in the Lord, is said to have wept ; and turning to the Lord, he gave the mourners only this answer—"O Lord, if I be still necessary to thy people, I refuse not the labor ; thy will be done." He was obviously so divided between hope of heaven and love to the Church, that he doubted which to choose ; for he wished neither to forsake the church nor to be longer separated from Christ ; yet he laid no stress on his own wish, nor left anything to his own choice, but submitted everything to the sovereign will of the Lord. Seems he not to address the Lord, in these few words—"Hard indeed is the warfare of the body, and I am satisfied to have striven thus long ; but if thou commandest me still to keep guard before thy camp, I refuse not, nor plead my failing strength as an excuse. I will devotedly fulfill the duties that thou chargest me with, and will fight on under thy command ; and however desirable to an old man, be a discharge after long service, yet shall my courage triumph over my years, nor yield to old age ; and thy will, O Lord, is my good, whether or not thou sparest my age ; and thou wilt guard these for whom I am concerned."

O unexampled man ! Unconquered by labor, unconquerable by death ; who was equally ready either to die or to live. Now, after he had lain ill of the fever during some days, still he ceased not from the work of God. During the night he compelled his failing limbs to serve his spirit in prayers and vigils as he lay on his noble couch of sackcloth and ashes. And when he was asked by his disciples to allow at least some vile straw to be spread under him, he answered—"No, it becomes not a Christian to die except on the ashes. I sin if I leave you any other sort of example." So with eyes and hands ever directed towards heaven, he allowed not his invincible spirit to relax from prayer. And when he was requested by the presbyters present, to relieve his suffering body by turning upon his side—"Suffer me, my brethren (said he) to look towards heaven rather than towards the earth, that my spirit may be directed in its journey towards the Lord."

When he had spoken these things he saw the Devil standing near. "Thou bloody beast, why standest thou here ?" said he ; "Murderer, thou wilt find nothing in me ; I am going to Abraham's bosom." When he had, by divine power, uttered these things, with a loud voice, he returned his spirit to God ; and they who were present, testified to us, that they saw on the lifeless body the bright halo of the glorified man. The face shone more brilliantly than sunbeams, and not the slightest spot defiled the other parts of the body. In all his members appeared the graceful softness of a child seven years old. Who would have thought that he was ever clothed in haircloth, and rolled in ashes ? he who now appeared clearer than glass, whiter than milk, in the glory as it were of his future resurrection, and the refined nature of his spiritual body.

An incredible multitude now assembled to join the funeral procession. The whole city ran to meet the corpse. All the inhabitants of the surrounding country, and many from the neighboring cities flocked together. Oh how great was the mourning of all ! how great especially the lamentation of the monks ! Two thousand of whom are said to have collected on that day These



were the peculiar glory of Martin ; for, from his example, so numerous a seed had sprung up to serve the Lord. Now the dead pastor drove his flock before him, the pale crowds of that vast multitude ;\* bands marching in their vestments of sack-cloth,† including the superannuated and the young novices just sworn into the service of Christ. Then came a choir of virgins, ashamed to weep, when they knew that they ought rather to rejoice for one whom the Lord now cherished in his bosom. With what holy joy did they conceal their grief ! when faith forbade them to weep, and sorrow compelled them to groan. For, their joy that he was glorified, was as holy as their trouble for his death was pious. You would pardon them for weeping ; you would congratulate them on their rejoicing ; because it was pious in them both to weep and to rejoice for Martin ; whilst every one would feel disposed on his own account to grieve, and bound on Martin's account to rejoice.

Wherefore the crowd follows the body of the blessed man to the place of sepulture, chanting heavenly hymns. The earthly pomp, I will not say of a funeral, but of a triumph, admits of comparison ; but what can be likened to Martin's funeral ? They may lead their captives bound, both before and after their triumphal cars ; but men who have conquered the world follow the body of Martin. An insane populace may honor them with confused shouts ; but Martin is applauded with divine psalms, he is honored with heavenly hymns. They after their triumphs are thrust down into a cruel hell ; Martin is received into Abraham's bosom, rejoicing. Martin, after a life of poverty and frugality, enters heaven rich ; whence he will, I trust, exercise a guardian-

\* Pale and emaciated from fasting.

† *Agmina palliata*, bands of monks wearing the *pallium*, a cloak of peculiar fashion, formerly worn by the ascetic philosophers among the Greeks ; still worn by them when they became Christians and continued their ascetic course of life ; and adopted as a uniform by the monks, their successors, who added monachism in the deserts to philosophical ascetism.

ship over us, and have regard to me who write, and to you who read these things.\*

\* Sulpicius omits to mention what a later writer and successor of Martin, namely Gregory of Tours, describes—the strife between the people of Poitiers and the people of Tours, about the body of Martin. Condata, where the saint died and was buried, was situated on the border between the territories of Tours and Poitiers. But so precious a body could not be suffered to moulder in so obscure a place. The people of each city and province assembled to remove it to their capital. They met and contended, and watched, each to prevent the other from bearing away the prize, each to get it for themselves. At last, probably by some foul means, the people of Poitiers were cast into a deep sleep, and the people of Tours stole away the body, carried it to their city, and build a great cathedral church over it. So we read in the life of Hilarion, that Hesychius, his disciple, conveyed that saint's body from Cyprus by stealth, and at the risk of his life.

Why this furious eagerness to get possession of a saint's bones by any means, fair or foul, gentle or violent? First, a superstitious notion derived from the heathen, that the spirits of the dead still hovered about their relics; then, when monkish saintship came up, and miraculous power was ascribed to it, the notion that the saint would work miracles by his relics. The superstition of the age here mixed up two inconsistent notions—the heathen notion that the departed spirit loved even the putrid remains of its late corporeal habitation, and the monkish notion that this same body was an enemy of the spirit, a burden to be laid aside with joy, and to be lightened as a burden and weakened as an enemy by all possible mortifications short of immediate self-murder. The fathers, and the monks, and the multitude, by the end of the fourth century, and among Roman Catholics to this day, attributed and do attribute to their saints, while they have a living, beautiful, and active body, a hatred to it, and an ardent desire to cast it off; but for this same body, and for the least remnant of it, when it is dead, and loathsome, and utterly useless, such an ardent love, that they will haunt the place where it is, and work miracles for those that make a treasure of it, and pray to them over it!

## CHAPTER . XXI .

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### THREE DIALOGUES OF SULPICIUS SEVERUS.

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#### DIALOGUE I.

ON THE VIRTUES AND MIRACLES OF THE EASTERN MONKS.

I WAS in company with our Gallus, who was exceedingly dear to me, both on account of his own merits, and out of regard to Martin, whose disciple he had been ; when lo ! my friend Postumian came up to us, on his return from the East, where he had been travelling on my account during the last three years, far from his native country. I embraced my loving friend ; I kissed his knees and his feet : we parted a step or two, looked at each other with astonishment, and wept with mutual joy. After we had walked about a little, we laid our hair-cloths on the ground, and took our seats upon them. Postumian first broke silence : he looked at me and said :—When I was in the remote parts of Egypt, I took a notion to travel down to the sea. There I found a ship preparing to sail with a load of merchandize for Narbonne.\* That night I dreamed that you stood by me, and laid hold on me, to draw me aboard of that ship. At the break of day, when I rose from the place where I had lain, I meditated on this dream, and was seized with so sudden a longing for you, that I made no

\* Narbonne and Marseilles were the two principal seaports on the southern coast of Gaul or France.

delay, but got on board of the ship. On the thirtieth day we landed at Marseilles, whence I have come hither in ten days : so prosperous a voyage was granted to my pious wish. And now, as it was for you that I travelled so far by sea and land, allow me to enjoy your embrace and conversation in private.

I too (said I) was engrossed with thinking of you, whilst you tarried in Egypt : day and night I kept you in my mind, and my whole heart was filled with my love for you. Think not that I shall be a moment without you now ; I will hang on your love ; I will behold you and hear you and talk with you, and no one shall be admitted to the privacy which this retired cell affords us. As to our friend Gallus here, you will not, I suppose, object to his presence ; for you see that he, as well as myself, is filled with joy at your arrival.

Right ! said Postumian, we will keep Gallus in our company : for though my acquaintance with him be slight, yet because he is your dear friend, he is dear to me, especially as he is one of Martin's disciples. Nor will I take it hardly to enter with you into the most free and intimate conversation, according to your desire ; since I came hither for the very purpose, that I might hang on this Sulpicius Severus and talk to his heart's content.

He clasped me in his arms while speaking these last words.

Indeed (said I) you have satisfactorily proved how much pious love can do, when for my sake you traversed so many lands and seas, and have now returned from what may be called the farthest rising of the sun, all the way hither to its going down. Come then, since we are by ourselves, and have nothing that should hinder us from listening to your story ; give us the whole history of your travels ; tell us how the Christian faith prospers in the East ; whether the saints are in peace ; what are the institutions of the monks ; and what great signs and miracles Christ works by the hands of his servants. For, to a certainty, as we have a wearisome life of it in the present state of these regions, we shall gladly hear if Christians are suffered to live in peace even in the desert.

To these things Postumian answered ; I shall certainly do as you desire ; but first I wish to hear whether all the priests whom I left here, are such as they were before I went abroad.

Ask not (I replied) of things which, I suppose, you know as well as I do ; or if you know them not, it were better that you should not hear. But this I must tell you, that they of whom you inquire are no better than you knew them to be ; but that individual, our former friend, by whom we used to obtain relief from the persecutions of these men, has been more harsh towards us than he ought to have been. But I will not speak more unkindly of him, because I loved him as a friend ; and when I supposed him to be an enemy, I still cherished a friendly feeling towards him. But yet, when I reflected on these things, I was stung to the heart, to think that we should have almost entirely lost the friendship of a wise and religious man ; and that he, formerly so much our friend should now be so bitter against us. Well, let us quit these painful subjects ; and let us rather hear you, as you promised a little while ago that we should.

Be it so (said Postumian). When he had said this, we all kept silence for a little. Then moving the hair-cloth on which he sat a little nigher to me, he thus began.

2. Three years ago, when I bade you farewell, Sulpicius, I went to Narbonne, where I embarked, and on the fifth day afterwards we entered an African port, so prosperous a voyage had we by the will of God. I had a mind to go to Carthage, to visit the places where the saints had been buried, but especially to worship at the tomb of the martyr Cyprian.\* After an absence of fifteen days, we returned from this pilgrimage to the port, and put to sea for Alexandria. But the winds being contrary, we were driven almost into the quicksands of the coast. The sailors

\* Pilgrimages to holy places were now becoming common among Christians. The tombs of distinguished martyrs and other saints were much visited for devotional purposes ; it being believed, as mentioned in a preceding note, that the spirits of the departed hovered about their relics, and that prayers offered there would be aided by the intercessions of the saints.

observing this, immediately cast anchor, and stopped the ship in her dangerous course.

The coast of Africa stretched out before us in full view ; so we got into our boats and went ashore. We saw nothing but a barren, lonely desert : but this circumstance excited my curiosity to explore the interior of the country. When I had proceeded about three miles from the shore, I observed a small hut among the sands. Its roof was, as Sallust describes the huts of this country, like the keel of a ship, extending to the ground and covered with stout boards ; not from any fear of violent rains (for a shower of rain was never heard of there), but to guard against the winds, which in this region become wrecking storms, when in milder climates they are gentle breezes. No seeds are planted there, and not a blade of vegetation springs up, because the loose and parched sands yield to every impulse of the winds. But where hills rise against the sea and break the force of the winds, the land behind them acquires a degree of firmness, and produces a scanty and rough herbage, on which a few sheep may feed. The inhabitants live on milk ; only such of them as are more skillful, or more wealthy (if I may so call them) have bread made of barley ; which is their only harvest, and succeeds, because the quickness of its growth, owing to the nature of the soil and climate, enables it to escape the ravages of the storms ; for it is said to ripen in thirty days after it is sown. Men live there for no other reason than because they are free from taxes,\* from which their situation exempts them ; for it is the extreme border of the Cyrenians, and next to that vast desert which separates Egypt from Western Africa, and through which Cato formerly led his army, when he was flying from Cæsar.

When I went to the hut which I had seen at a distance, I

\* The grinding taxation of the Roman government, the frequent civil wars, and the system of domestic slavery, combined with the prevalence of luxury and other vices, had now brought the Roman empire to the verge of ruin, and gave additional force to the superstitious notions that drove such multitudes out of common society into desert places and monastic seclusion.

found an old man clothed in sheepskins and turning a handmill. He received us kindly. We told him that a storm had driven us upon that coast, and that we waited for a calm sea, before we could venture to pursue our voyage ; that we had landed with the natural desire of knowing something of the country and its inhabitants. That we were Christians and were solicitous to know whether any Christians lived in those deserts. The old man, when he heard this, wept for joy and embraced our knees. Having kissed us over and over again, he invited us to join him in prayer ; then laying some sheepskins on the ground, he made us recline upon them, and set before us a plentiful dinner, that is, the half of a barley loaf. Now *we* were four in number, and *he* made the fifth. He brought in also a handful of some herb, whose name I have forgotten ; but it looked like mint, was full of leaves, and had the taste of honey. We relished this sweet herb exceedingly, and made a hearty dinner.

Here I smiled, and said to Gallus—" Well, Gallus, how would you like to dine on a handful of herbs and half a loaf for five men ?"

Gallus, being a very modest man, blushed a little, and taking my raillery in good part, he said—" This is your way, Sulpicius, to let slip no opportunity of twitting us about eating too much. But you are cruel to require us Gauls to live like the angels ; though in my zeal for eating, I can believe that the angels eat too. As to that half of a barley loaf—why I should think it a poor mouthful for myself alone ; but that meagre Cyrenian might be well content with it ; for hunger belongs to him either by necessity or by nature. Nor do I wonder that half-starved and weather-beaten voyagers should think it a good dinner ; but for our parts, we are far from the sea, in a plentiful country ; and what is more, as I have often told you, we are Gauls. But let him go on and finish the story of this Cyrenian."

Well, (said Postumian,) I shall take care hereafter how I praise any man's abstinence, lest the Gauls should be offended by an example which they cannot imitate. I intended, however, to

describe also the supper and the following meals of that Cyrenian, for we stayed a week with him ; but I must pass over these feasts of the desert, that Gallus may not think himself twitted. To proceed with other matters ; The next day, when some of the inhabitants came together to see us, we learned that our host was a minister of the Gospel, a fact which he had taken care not to let us know. He then went with us to the church, about two miles distant, and shut out from our view by an intervening mountain. It was a mere hut, made of interwoven brush, and not much bigger than the tabernacle of our host, and so low that one could not stand upright within it. When we inquired into the customs of these people, we discovered the remarkable fact, that they neither bought nor sold anything, and did not know what fraud or theft was. Gold and silver, which mankind are most eager to obtain, they neither possess nor desire. For when I offered the minister ten gold pieces, he refused them, protesting, wisely, that the Church was not built up, but rather destroyed by money. We presented him with a little clothing, which he took kindly ; and now being called by the sailors to embark, we bade him adieu and set sail.

3. We had a prosperous voyage of seven days to Alexandria. Here a shameful contest was going on between the priests and the monks. The occasion was this : the priests had repeatedly met and decreed in full synod, that no one should read or even possess the books of Origen,\* who was esteemed a learned and most skillful interpreter of the Scriptures. But the bishops marked some unsound passages in his writings. These passages his advocates durst not defend ; but alleged that they had been foisted in by heretics ; therefore they argued that the sound parts ought

\* This controversy about the books of Origen raged about the year 349, when the Synod in Alexandria passed this decree. It was more especially Origen's Book of Principles that gave rise to this controversy. Ruffinus translated this book into Latin, and thus spread the controversy through the western branch of the Church. The prohibition for any one to *read* or even to *possess* these books, shows to what a pitch of despotism clerical power had already attained.



not to be condemned with the unsound, when the faithful reader could easily make the distinction, so as not to follow the spurious passages, while he adhered to those which were conformable to the Catholic doctrine. It was not wonderful (they said) if in books newly written, the heretics should exercise their fraudulent arts, when they had not scrupled to corrupt and interpolate the Gospel verity itself. But the bishops obstinately opposed this argument, and used their power to get a sentence of condemnation passed against the whole of these writings, sound and unsound, and against the author himself; because there was (as they said) a great abundance of books that had been received by the Church, and no reading ought to be permitted that would do more harm to the unwise, than good to the wise.\*

I examined with much curiosity some of the books of this writer, and was highly pleased with parts of them; but I found some things on which his opinions were certainly erroneous; these however, are the passages which his defenders say have been interpolated and falsified. It is strange that one and the same man should differ from himself so much; that in those parts which are approved, no man since the Apostles should equal him; while in those parts which are justly condemned, no man has more grossly erred. For when the passages extracted by the bishops, and which appeared to be contrary to the Catholic faith, were read, that passage excited the greatest dissatisfaction in which, according to the edition then used, the opinion was expressed, that the Lord Jesus, as he had come in the flesh for the redemption of man, and had suffered death for his salvation, so he would by the same course of suffering redeem even the Devil; because it was conformable to his goodness that he who reformed lost man, should deliver also a fallen angel. When these and other

\* The bishops had already arrogated to themselves the sole power to determine what was sound doctrine, and to judge for the inferior clergy and people what they should read and what they should believe. St. Paul disclaimed dominion over the faith of Christians (2 Cor. i. 24); but then pampered prelates of an established church, three hundred years later, assumed to be lords over God's heritage (1 Pet. v. 3).

like expressions were produced by the bishops, party zeal raised a violent sedition. When the bishops tried in vain to quiet the disturbance, a measure was resorted to of evil tendency in respect to the church government; the prefect, or governor of the city was called in,\* through the terror which he inspired, the brethren and the monks were driven from place to place, and by means of threatening proclamations were deterred from settling any where.

This fact made a strong impression on me; that Jerome, a man strictly Catholic, and a most learned divine, who was supposed at first to be a follower of Origen, now condemned his writings altogether. I did not venture to judge hastily of anything; excellent and learned men, however, took different sides in this controversy. But still, be this an error only, as I think, or a heresy, as some suppose, not only was it not suppressed by the numerous censures of the clergy, but it could never have spread so far, had it not grown by the controversy waged against it.

Such was the disturbed state of Alexandria, when I reached that city. The bishop received me, nevertheless, with a degree of kindness, which I had not expected, and pressed me to stay with him. But I had no mind to tarry at a place where scenes of violence among brethren had lately existed, and where feelings of hatred still rankled; for although the monks ought, perhaps, to have submitted to the bishops, still it was wrong, especially in bishops, to afflict for this cause a numerous body of Christian professors.

4. Therefore I left this place, and set off for Bethlehem, which is distant from Jerusalem six miles, but from Alexandria is no less than sixteen days' journey. The presbyter Jerome rules the

\* The Alexandrians were much given to tumults and seditions, which often required the interposition of the civil and military power. But in this case the bishops called in the civil power to enforce submission to their decree. We are not to understand that all the monks were Origenists; and it not likely that those who were, did anything more than clamor and complain of the tyranny of the bishops.

church there ; for it is a parish not a bishoprick,\* and is under the bishop of Jerusalem. The acquaintance which I had made with Jerome, long ago in my former travels, assured me that no man was more worthy of a visit. For in addition to the merit of his faith and the rich store of his virtues, he is so well versed in Latin, in Greek, and even in Hebrew learning, that no man can stand a comparison with him in any branch of knowledge. But I wonder if you have not become acquainted with him through his many writings, for he is read throughout the whole world.

Yes, (said Gallus,) we are but too well acquainted with him ; for five years ago, I read a book of his, in which, he cuts and slashes all the monks of our nation. Hence our Belgic friend is often very angry, because he charges us with the custom of eating until we vomit. But I forgive the man ; and I am of the opinion that he aims his satire at the Eastern rather than the Western monks ; for full feeding is in the Greeks gluttony, but in the Gauls nature.

Well, (said I,) Gallus, you defend your nation like a scholar : but I pray you does that book condemn only that one vice in the monks ? No, indeed, (said he,) the writer lets nothing slip ; he exposes and lashes, and tears everything. He inveighs particularly against avarice and vanity ; he speaks much also of pride and of superstition. I acknowledge that he seems to have drawn a true picture of the vices of many. But how truly and forcibly has he argued concerning the familiarities of the monks, and even of the clergy, with the virgins.† For this reason he is said not to be liked by certain persons whom I shall not name. For as our Belgian brother is angry at our being noted for excessive

\* The terms *paroccia*, parish, and *diocesis*, diocese, were in this century often used interchangeably ; for originally all the Christians in and about a city constituted but one congregation, under the bishops' immediate care. But when their number increased, and Christianity spread throughout the country, they had to be divided into several congregations, each of which finally became a distinct parish, under the immediate care of a priest or pastor.

† See our extracts from Jerome, Chap. XII.

eating, so these men are said to be enraged,\* when they read the following words in that little work. "The virgin despises an unmarried man who is a real brother; she seeks a connection with one who is not of her own family." Here I said, Gallus, you go too far; beware lest some one acquainted with these matters overhear you, and begin to dislike both you and Jerome. For as you are a scholar, I may admonish you in the words of the comic poet—"Flattery begets friendship; but truth, hatred." Do you rather, Postumian, go on with the account of your Eastern travels.

Well, (said he,) as I was about to tell you, I stayed with Jerome six months. He was waging an incessant contest against bad men. He drew on himself the hatred of profligates; the heretics hated him, because he never ceased to attack them; the clergy hated him because he rebuked their scandalous lives and their criminal acts. But all good men evidently admire and love him; for they who take him to be a heretic, are out of their senses. I might say truly that the man's universal knowledge is itself sufficient evidence of sound doctrine. He devotes himself wholly to books and study; he rests neither day nor night; he is always either reading or writing something. Had it not been for my fixed determination and oath before God, to visit the desert, I could not have left so great a man, even for an hour. Having communicated to him all that I had to say, and having parted from his household, who, against my desire, had followed and hung on me along the road, I felt relieved as of a heavy burthen, and returned with a light heart to Alexandria. After I had visited the brethren there, I made my way thence to Thebaid, which is the remotest district of Upper Egypt; for there, I was told, were vast and lonely deserts occupied by monks.

† From this it is evident that the shameful practice alluded to, existed among the clergy and virgins of Gaul. In fact, it or its equivalent in some form, prevailed more or less through the Church from the time that the clergy were forbidden to marry, either by a law of the Church, or by public opinion.

5. It would require a long time for me to relate all that I saw. I will, however, touch on a few particulars out of many. On the border of the desert near the Nile, are many monasteries,\* which are, in general occupied, each by one hundred monks with whom it is a fundamental rule to live under the government of abbots, and to do nothing of their own will, but in all things to obey the nod and authority of the abbot. If any of them should aspire to the superior virtue of a solitary life, they betake themselves to the desert, but not till they obtain the abbot's permission; for in their estimation the prime virtue of all is obedience to the command of another person. When they have passed into the desert, they are, by the abbot's order, served with bread or other sort of food. It happened during the time of my sojourn there, that the abbot sent two boys, the one fifteen, the other twelve years of age, to carry bread to a monk who had set up his lonely tabernacle in the desert, about six miles from the monastery. On their return they were met by a most venomous sort of serpent, called the aspic. This one was of extraordinary size. Not at all frightened at the occurrence they waited till the aspic came close to their feet, and, as if under the influence of a charm, laid its blue neck on the ground. The younger boy took it in his hand, and wrapping it in his cloak, carried it to the monastery. Here he walked in with the air of a conqueror, till he met the brethren; and then, before their eyes, he unfolded the cloak and laid the captive reptile on the floor. The brethren extolled the faith and courage of the children; but the abbot took a deeper view of the case; lest the weak-minded youth should grow proud, he had them both scourged with rods, and reprimanded them severely, because they had betrayed what the Lord had done through them. He told them that the miracle

\* The Fathers in the latter half of the fourth century considered these deserts as a heaven upon earth. "Go now, (said Chrysostom,) to the desert of Egypt, and you will find it become more delightful than a paradise; for there are ten thousand choirs of angels in human form." Epiphanius said, "The monasteries there are like tabernacles, full of heavenly choirs, singing psalms, reading and praying."

was to be attributed, not to their faith, but to the power of God; and that they should learn to serve God in humility, and not to glory in prodigies and miracles; because the consciousness of our infirmities was better than the vanity that springs from miracles.

When the monk in the desert heard how the children had been endangered by the serpent, and how they had been rewarded for their victory over it by a severe scourging, he besought the abbot not to send him thereafter any sort of food. The eighth day had now arrived, since this Christian man had been enduring the risk of starvation; his limbs were emaciated with fasting, but his mind intent on heaven, could not fail; his body was enfeebled with famine, but his faith remained strong. Meanwhile the abbot was admonished by the spirit that he should visit this disciple; and desiring with pious solicitude to know by what nourishment the life of this believer was supported, who was unwilling that man should supply him with bread, he went in person to seek him. The monk, when he saw the old man coming, went out and met him, thanked him for the visit, and led him into his little cell. When they came in, they saw a basket made of palm leaves suspended to the door post, and heaped full of warm bread. They touched it, and found it as hot as if it had only just come out of the oven. It differed, however, in its form and appearance from Egyptian bread. Struck with amazement, they both acknowledged it to be the gift of heaven. The monk ascribed the miraculous gift to the abbot's visit; the abbot ascribed it rather to the faith and virtue of the monk; so they both broke the heavenly bread with great joy. When the old man returned to the monastery, and told the miracle to the brethren, their minds were influenced with such zeal, that they were all in a hurry to get into the holy solitudes of the desert, confessing themselves to be miserable beings, who had stayed so long in a large congregation, where they had to bear the company and conversation of men.

6. In this monastery I saw two old men \* who were said to

\* These old men are mentioned also by Cassian and by Pelagius. One of them was called Pœsius, the other John.

have spent forty years without ever having gone outside of the walls. I must not omit to mention what I heard of their virtues, since I had it from the abbot himself, and often heard it spoken of with admiration by the brethren—namely, that the sun had never seen the one of them eating, nor the other angry.

At these words, Gallus looked at me and said, “Oh! that that brother of yours (I will not mention his name,) were now present, that he might hear this example; for we have often seen him angry against many persons; although he hath lately forgiven his enemies, so far as I have heard; yet if he were told of this example, he would be more confirmed in his purpose of amendment, and in the conviction that it was an excellent virtue never to be moved with anger; *but the harder the battle, the more glorious the victory.* Wherefore I deem a certain man, whom you may know, the more worthy of praise, because when his freed man had ungratefully deserted him, he pitied rather than pursued him. Neither was he angry with the man who was believed to have enticed him to run away. But for my part, if Postumian had not given this example of a man subduing anger, I should have been in a grievous passion at such a desertion of my freedman. But since it is unlawful to be angry, we should avoid all mention of things that vex us. Let us rather hear you, Postumian, proceed now with your story.

Yes, Gallus, I will, (said he,) so long as I see you both so desirous of hearing. But, remember, I cheerfully comply with your request, because I lend you my story upon interest; expecting that you will afterwards comply with a like request of mine. Why, (said I,) we have nothing wherewith to repay you the principal of your story, let alone the interest. But you may demand of us whatever you think just, if you will now go on as you have begun, and will satisfy our desire; for your narrative delights us exceedingly. I will not frustrate your wishes, (said Postumian,) and as you have heard the virtue of one anchorite in the commencement of his course, I will tell you something about a number of others.

7. When I had entered the nearer parts of the desert\* about twelve miles from the Nile, under the guidance of a brother well acquainted with the localities, we came to an old monk who dwelt at the foot of a mountain. There we found a well, a very rare thing in those parts. He had an ox, whose whole labor consisted in drawing water by turning a wheel-machine; for the well was said to be at least a thousand feet deep. Here was a garden with plenty of potherbs, nourished by the water of the well. This fertility was contrary to the nature of the desert, where the ground, parched by the burning rays of the sun, never of itself produces the least root or germ of vegetation. But the joint labor of the saint and his beast produced him this flourishing garden; for frequent irrigation gave such fertility to the sands, that we admired the wonderful verdure and thriftiness of the plants. On these, then, both the ox and his master lived; and out of the same abundance the saint gave us our supper. There I saw what you Gauls will hardly believe—a pot of herbs boiling without fire! Such is the heat of the sun, that you may cook what you please, even to a mess for Gallic stomachs. After supper, when the evening came on, he invited us to accompany him to a palm tree about two miles distant. The fruit of this tree he was in the habit of using; for the desert produces no other sort of trees, and these rarely, still there are some of them; but I know not whether they were planted by the prudent care of the ancients, or generated by the heat of the sun. This, however, appears certain, that God foreseeing that the desert was to be at some time inhabited by saints, provided these trees for the use of his servants for the greater part of those who hide themselves in these solitudes, have no other means of subsistence, than the fruit of these trees.\*

\* Jerome who well knew what a dry and burning waste this was, exclaims, in his epistle to Heliodorus, “O desert, blooming with the flowers of Christ! O solitude, where those stones are produced, of which in the Apocalypse, the temple of God is built! O familiar waste, rejoicing in God.”

† Those palm trees grew there probably thousands of years before mona-



Now, when we arrived at the tree to which the kindness of our host was leading us, we met a lion there ; at the sight of which I and my guide trembled. But the saint went on straightway to the tree ; we followed, trembling, however. The wild beast, evidently by Divine control, modestly retired a little way, and then stopped until he gathered a handful of fruit from the lower branches and offered it to the beast, which then ran up and took the nuts more freely than a tame animal would do ; and having eaten them, it went away. Whilst we looked on these things, though we still trembled, we could understand the strength of his faith and the weakness of ours.

8. We saw another equally singular man, who dwelt in a little hut, barely large enough to contain himself.\* Of this man it was reported that a she-wolf used to stand by him when at supper ; that she rarely failed to present herself at meal-time, and to wait before the door until he gave her the remnant of the bread on which he had supped ; and that she would then lick his hand, as it were to thank and comfort him, and so leave the place. But it happened once, that the saint having conducted a brother who had visited him, some distance on his way, was later than usual, and did not return until night. Meanwhile the beast had come at the usual hour of supper, and missing her friendly patron, she entered the vacant cell out of curiosity, to look for him. A basket of palm leaves, containing five loaves, happened to be hanging near. She took the liberty of devouring one of the loaves, and having committed this trespass, she went away. When the hermit returned, he saw his basket broken and one of the loaves missing. Observing some fragments of the devoured

chism arose in the Church, and they grow there still, more than a thousand years after monks have ceased to occupy the desert. But such was the infatuated admiration of the hermit-life of the monks in those days, that not only the palm-trees, but doubtless the vast and torrid wastes of the earth, were then thought to have been made for the monks.

\* Such a kennel did St. Hilarion build for himself in the desert near Gaza. See the *Life of Hilarion*, § 9.

loaf near the door, he was at no loss to conjecture the author of the theft. When the wolf, had not, for some days, come as usual, scrupling, from conscious guilt, it seems, to visit her injured benefactor, the hermit felt badly to do without the solace of his pet. She was at last recalled by his prayers, and came on the seventh day, as she had used to do, at supper time ; but evidently with the downcast look of a penitent, and ashamed to come near him, showing that she begged to be forgiven. The hermit pitying her embarrassment, commanded her to come nigher, and with a gentle hand stroked her downcast head. Then he refreshed his penitent with a double portion of bread. Having thus obtained indulgence, she laid aside her grief, and renewed her customary attendance. Behold, I pray you, even in this case, the power of Christ, which gives wisdom to the brute and tames the ferocity of the wolf. Here a wolf performs a duty ; a wolf is conscious of guilt ; a wolf is confounded with a sense of shame ; she comes when called, presents her head, and knows that pardon is granted to her as an humble penitent. This is thy power, O Christ ! These, O Christ, are thy miracles ! For thine are the mighty works done by thy servants in thy name ; and for this we groan,\* that wild beasts feel thy majesty, while men revere it not.

9. But lest this should seem incredible to any one, I will relate greater things. I call Christ to witness that I feign nothing, and relate nothing on vague report. I tell only what I learned from faithful men.

Many live in the desert without any sort of habitation. These are called anchorites. They live on the roots of herbs ; they never stay in any certain place, lest they should be frequented

\* It were hard to say which of the two was guilty of the most arrant folly, the most unnatural crimes, the fanatical hermit, who shunned the company of his fellow men and courted that of a wolf, or the historian, who could break out into such a strain of laudatory exclamations about this she-wolf's piety ! We have a similar piece of monkish fatuity in the next section.

by men; they lodge wherever night may happen to overtake them. Two monks of Nitria set out in quest of one who lived in this manner, in a region far remote from them. They sought him because they had formerly been intimate friends of his in the monastery, and now heard of the miracles which he performed. After a laborious search of seven months, they found him dwelling on the farthest border of the desert which lies in the neighborhood of Memphis. In these solitudes he was said to have now spent twelve years. Though he shunned the sight of men, yet when he recognized his old acquaintances, he did not avoid them, nor refuse to give them his company during three days. On the fourth day, when he proceeded a space with them on their departure, they beheld a wonderfully large lioness approaching them. The beast, although three of us were present, knowing the individual whom she sought, fell down at the feet of the anchorite, and rolling about with a doleful sort of cry, exhibited the feeling of a mourner, and the posture of a petitioner. She excited the sympathy of all, and especially of him who understood that he was the person sought for. Accordingly he went after her, and we followed. She would go forward, then she would stop and look back at them, manifestly showing that the anchorite should follow her. To cut the story short, they came to the beast's den, where she had five grown young ones, which the animal had great difficulty to nourish, because they had been blind from their birth. She brought them out of the cavern one by one, and laid them at the anchorite's feet. Now, at length, the saint discovered what the beast wanted; therefore calling upon God, he applied his hand to the closed eyes of the young lions, whose eyes were opened immediately, and beheld the light from which they had been so long excluded.

The monks having accomplished the desired visit to the anchorite, returned well rewarded for their laborious search, in having been permitted to witness such miraculous power, that they might testify to others the mighty faith of the saint, and the glory of Christ.

I am going to tell you another wonder. Five days afterwards the lioness returned to her benefactor, and brought him as a gift the skin of some rare animal ; which from that time the saint usually wore in the manner of a cloak ; not disdaining to accept from a wild beast, a gift which he ascribed to another and higher power.\*

10. There was in those regions another famous anchorite. He inhabited the part of the desert which lies near Syene, at the upper extremity of Egypt. He intended, when he betook himself to the desert, to live on the roots and tops of herbs, of which the sand produces some sorts that are very wholesome and well tasted. But at first, not knowing how to select the proper sorts, he often mistook and gathered such as were noxious ; nor was it easy by the taste to distinguish the wholesome from the poisonous ; because all are equally sweet, but the greater part conceal a deadly poison under this flattering sweetness. When, therefore, after eating he found himself tormented by this secret poison, and all his bowels racked with pains, and his stomach, the seat of life, almost consumed by frequent vomitings and intolerable gnawings, he dreaded to eat anything that he found, and was now almost expiring with a total fast of seven days, when a wild goat of the species called Ibex, came and stood near him. He threw it a parcel of herbs which he had gathered the day before, but was afraid to taste. The animal tossed away with its nose such of the plants as were poisonous, and chose such as it knew to be

\* Palladius, a writer of the fifth century, who had resided long among the Egyptian monks, and wrote the lives of some of them, told a similar story. A hyena roused one of the hermits by knocking at his cell door. When the saint opened the door, he found that she had brought him a blind young one to have its eyes opened ; which being done, the grateful beast, afterwards, brought her benefactor a sheepskin as a fee. " You stole it, (said the saint,) I will none of it." But then relenting, he added, " If you will promise me never to steal another sheep, I will accept your present." The grateful hyena nodded the required promise ; and doubtless became a very honest hyena from that day. The reader sees that Palladius improved upon the story of Sulpicius.

wholesome. So the saint having learned by this example what he should eat and what reject, escaped the danger of famine, and avoided the poisonous plants.

But it would be tedious to relate all that I know, or that I heard from others, respecting the inhabitants of the desert. I stayed a year and almost seven months in those solitudes, rather out of admiration at the virtue of others, than out of any purpose that I durst venture to form of embracing a mode of life so arduous and so trying. I resided most of the time with the old man who had the well and the ox.

11. I visited two monasteries of St. Anthony, occupied at present by his disciples. I went also to the place where the most blessed Paul, the hermit, first took up his solitary abode. I saw the Red Sea ; I ascended the ridge of Mount Sinai, whose loftiest top almost touches heaven, and is inaccessible to man. In the recesses of this mountain, a certain anchorite was said to dwell, whom I long sought for in vain. He had been now almost fifty years separated from human society. He had worn no clothing, but used as a substitute the Divine gift of a thick coat of hair, that grew out upon him.\* As often as religious men sought to meet with him, he ran away into pathless wilds, and avoided the sight of all men ; except that five years before he had given his company to one man, who, I believe, merited his success by his mighty faith. This man in the course of their conversations asked him why he so shunned the conversation of men. He is said to have answered, that he who is much in the company of men, is seldom visited by angels.† Hence it came to be the opinion of many that he had intercourse with angels.

Leaving Mount Sinai, I returned to the Nile, and surveyed

\* The same is related of other savage saints of the desert, as St. Macarius, St. Onuphrius, &c., who, by going naked, grew as hairy as their fellow brutes. The Hindoo saint, who, as we mentioned in our account of Hindoo monachism, was seen at Astracan, was also as hairy as a beast.

† We said in the first chapter, that these savage and hairy anchorites were believed to be favorites of the angels. Here is a proof of the fact.

both banks of the river, along which numerous monasteries had been built. I saw that each monastery was occupied, as I said before, by one hundred monks. But it was ascertained that two or even three thousand dwelt in the same village. Do not think, however, that the monks who live thus in large numbers together, have less virtue than those are known to have, who live apart from human society. Their chief virtue, as I said before, consists in obedience. No one who comes to connect himself with the monastery, is admitted as a member by the abbot, until he shall have undergone, with approbation, a severe and thorough trial, and thus satisfied the abbot that he will never refuse obedience to any command whatever, be it ever so arduous or humiliating.

12. I will relate to you two most wonderful and almost incredible instances of obedience. I could easily cite a large number, if it were necessary; but if a few examples do not excite to a virtuous emulation, a large number would prove unavailing. Well; a certain man after renouncing the pursuits of the world, went to enter himself in a monastery where the rules were very strict. In answer to his inquiries, the abbot stated to him many things that he would find it hard to observe. "Our discipline (said he) is very laborious, and my commands are such as nothing but consummate fortitude will enable you to fulfill. You had better go to another monastery, where they live under easier rules, than attempt here what you may find yourself unable to go through with." These warnings of the abbot did not deter the applicant from his purpose; on the contrary, they excited him to promise unlimited obedience, so that he would go into fire itself if the abbot should so order. The abbot on hearing this profession, immediately put its sincerity to the proof. There happened to be, near by, an oven which was being prepared to bake bread; a large fire had been kindled in it; the flames were bursting out at every hole and cranny, and within the cavity the fire was raging furiously. This fiery oven did the master command the stranger to enter. The man obeyed promptly. He crept

directly into the midst of the flames, which yielded to a faith so daring, as formerly they did in the case of the Hebrew children. Nature itself was overcome ; the fire fled ; and he who was to all appearance going to be consumed, wondered to find himself bathed in a refreshing dew. But what wonder, if the fire did not touch thy disciple, O Christ ? So neither was the abbot sorry for his command, nor the disciple for his obedience ; since, on the day of his arrival, he underwent a trial, which, as it would have detected the slightest weakness, proved that he was perfect. Well did he deserve his success and his glory, proved as he was by obedience, and glorified by suffering.

13. What I am now going to relate, happened in the same monastery, and was fresh in the memory of those who reported it. A man applied in like manner to the same abbot for admission. When the first law of obedience was proposed to him, and he promised a patient submission to the utmost extremity of endurance, by chance the abbot was carrying in his hand a rod of storax, a sort of tree that grows in the East ; the rod had been long dry ; he stuck it into the ground and ordered the stranger to employ himself in watering it, until, contrary to nature, the dry wood should grow in a barren soil. The new comer, subjected to this hard condition, had every day to carry water on his shoulders from the Nile, which was about two miles distant : and now a whole year had revolved, during which the labor of the water-carrier ceased not, yet no fruit of his toil appeared, or could be expected to appear. Still he maintained the virtue of his obedience without flinching. The following year in like manner kept the now fatigued brother at his fruitless toil. At length, in the third successive revolution of the seasons, during which the water-bearer had continued night and day to pursue his operations, lo, the rod budded ! I myself saw the very shrub which sprang from that stick : it is kept to this day growing in the court of the monastery, fresh and green—standing there, as if to testify and demonstrate how much can be merited by obedience, and how much can be effected by faith. But I could spend the day

in detailing to you divers miracles, which I ascertained to have been performed by the saints.

14. I will, for the rest, give you two remarkable examples; the one of which will be a good antidote for the swellings of miserable vanity; the other will be an instructive illustration of self-righteousness.

But to proceed: a certain saint was endued with an incredible power to drive demons out of the bodies of the possessed, and performed every day some unheard-of miracles. He cured bodies possessed by demons, not only by word, when present, but sometimes also, when absent, by sending letters or a piece of fringe from his hair cloth-garment. Therefore he was resorted to by multitudes, collected from all parts of the world. To say nothing of inferior persons, governors, and judges of divers ranks, often lay before his door. Most holy bishops, laying aside their ecclesiastical authority, begged humbly that he would touch them and give them his blessing; believing, with reason that they were sanctified and enlightened by Divine grace, as often as they should touch his hand or his garment. He was said to abstain entirely from every sort of drink, and for food, (I will whisper it in your ear, Sulpicius, that Gallus may not hear) he sustained himself on seven figs daily. Meanwhile, as honor springs from virtue, so from honor, vanity began to grow up in this holy man. When he first perceived this evil taking possession of him, he strove long and much to drive it out. But even the consciousness of its inroads did not enable him to resist the progress of vanity, while his miraculous power continued. Everywhere demons confessed his control, and he could not keep off the crowds that gathered about him; meanwhile the lurking poison insinuated itself into every part of his breast, and he who could expel demons from the bodies of others, could not purify himself from secret thoughts of vanity. Then he is said to have prayed to the Lord with all his heart, that the power of the Devil might be let loose upon him for the space of five months, and that he might be made to resemble those whom he cured. Accordingly,



that mighty man,—famous through all the East,—he, to whose threshold multitudes had flocked,—at whose door the mightiest men had prostrated themselves,—was himself seized by a demon,—was chained:—in a word, he suffered all that demoniacs usually suffer. At last, when five months had passed, he was cured, not only of the demon, but—what was to him more useful and desirable—of vanity. But whilst I apply these remarks to another, my own infirmity occurs to my mind. For, who among us—if one poor manikin salute him, or one silly woman address to him some flattering compliment—is not immediately lifted up with pride and bloated with vanity? So that, even if he have not the consciousness of sanctity, yet because by the flattery or the error of fools he may be called a saint, he will esteem himself thrice a saint: and now, if many gifts be sent to him, he will consider himself honored by the bounty of God, because necessities are bestowed on him while he sleeps at his ease. And now, if some little token of miraculous power should succeed, he would think himself an angel. But although he be noted for no mighty work, yet if he be made a clergymen of any rank, he straightway enlarges the borders of his garment, delights in salutations, becomes vain by frequent calls upon him, and himself runs about everywhere; and he who formerly used to go a-foot or to ride upon an ass, now dashes proudly along on a foaming steed: content heretofore with a poor and narrow cell for his habitation, he now raises lofty ceilings, builds many chambers, carves his doors, paints his closets and pantries, spurns his coarse garment and desires soft clothing: this, too, he imposes as a tax on his dear widows, and familiar virgins, namely on one, that she weave him a short cloak, and on another, that she weave him a flowing robe.\*

\* In this elegant satire the genius of Sulpicius shines out, and the vices of many of the clergy in his time are graphically described. Our author is always a sensible as well as an elegant writer, except when he is infatuated by the monomaniac extravagances of monkery:—We fear that the picture here drawn of clerical vanity, and of female subserviency to clerical popinjays, too truly represents certain characters of our times.

But let us leave to the blessed Jerome the task of giving a cutting description of these things. We return to our purpose.—Here Gallus said, “Indeed you have left Jerome nothing to describe that I know of; so completely have you sketched our manners and customs, that if they take dispassionately these remarks of yours, and weigh them well, they will, in my opinion, so profit by them, as not to need afterwards the lashings of Jerome’s pen. But go on now, and unfold to us the promised example, which you said was adapted to admonish us against false righteousness; for, to confess the truth, this evil has infected us in Gaul to a most pernicious extent.”—I will do so (said Postumian) and keep you no longer in suspense.

15. A certain young man from Asia, wealthy, high-born, having a wife and little son, was a tribune of the army in Egypt, and in frequent military expeditions against the Blembi, or Blemmyes, a tribe on the borders of the Ethiopia. In the course of these expeditions, he came to certain parts of the desert where he saw many tabernacles of the saints. Here he heard the word of salvation from the blessed John. He was immediately disgusted with useless warfare, and all its vain glory: having therefore taken up his abode in the desert, he soon became distinguished for his perfection in every virtue. Mighty in fastings, conspicuous in humility, firm in faith, he easily attained to an equality with the ancient monks in the study of virtue. Presently, however, by suggestion of the devil, the thought struck him that he had better return to his country and save all his family, especially his wife and his only son; a scheme which he fancied would be more acceptable to God, than if, content with rescuing himself from the world, he had impiously neglected the salvation of his family. Deluded thus by the fair coloring of false righteousness, the hermit, at the end of four years, deserted his cell and his solitary mode of life. When he came to the nearest monastery, occupied by many brethren, he confessed his design. The brethren heard him in silence; the abbot of the place remonstrated; but the sentiment which he had fixed in his evil mind could not be eradi-

cated. With ill-fated obstinacy, therefore, and to the great grief of all, he hurried himself away from the brethren. But he was scarcely out of sight before he was filled with a demon ; began to omit bloody foam from his mouth, and to tear his own flesh with his teeth. He was carried back to the monastery on the shoulders of the brethren : and as the unclean spirit within him could not be controlled, he was of necessity bound with iron chains, so that his hands and feet were fastened together ; a merited punishment for such a deserter, who, as he could not be bound by faith, was bound with chains. After two years he was delivered from the unclean spirit by the prayers of the saints, and returned to the desert whence he had departed, being corrected himself, and by his example warning others that they should never suffer themselves to be deluded by false righteousness,\* nor be led by a fickle and unprofitable levity of mind to desert their post in the service of God, after having chosen it for themselves.

I have now related what I think sufficient, concerning the virtues and miracles which the Lord wrought in his servants, either for our imitation or for our warning. And now that I have satisfied your ears, or perhaps even wearied them by two long a narrative, do you (here he addressed himself to me) pay me the interest due for what I have lent you. Let us hear you tell, as you often do, a number of particulars concerning your Martin ; for I have long and ardently desired to hear you on this subject. What ! (said I) does not the book suffice you, which, as you know, I have written concerning the life and miracles of Martin ?

\* False righteousness!—A man in the vigor of life deserts his wife and child, becomes a hermit, and devotes himself to the severest ascetism. But when natural feeling and Christian principle begin to lead his thoughts back to his deserted family, a conflict ensues in his mind between monkish superstition and the better feelings of his nature. These prevail so far at last that he sets off for home, but with a mind disturbed by the remonstrances of the monks who give him up to the devil when he departs, as a deserter from Christ. He is so agitated by contending emotions, that his intellect becomes disordered—that is, a demon possesses him on account of his *false-righteousness*, in wishing to take care of his family.—Such is monkery !

16. That book (said Postumian) I am well acquainted with ; it never leaves my right hand. Here it is, well-worn, (said he, pulling the book out of his bosom) : this has been my constant associate and comforter by land and sea during my travels. Now I will inform you, how far your book has penetrated through the world, and how it furnishes matter for agreeable stories\* to the whole mass of the population.

Paulinus, a great friend of yours, first carried it to Rome. Soon there was an eager scramble for it, to the great profit of the booksellers, who found a readier sale for it than for any other book. It went far a-head of me in my travels. When I went to Africa, I found them reading it through all the country of Carthage. That Cyrenian priest with whom I tarried some days on my way to Egypt, was the only man whom I found without it, and he got permission to copy mine. At Alexandria nearly all the people have it by heart. It has gone through Egypt, Nitria, Thebaid, and the region about Memphis. In the desert I found it in the hands of an old man, who, as soon as he heard that I was an intimate friend of yours, charged me, as did all the brethren, that I should tell you, if ever I reached home,—by all means to complete the book, by putting in the miracles of Martin, which you had omitted. Come then, let us hear you on that subject : I ask you not to repeat what you have written, but to relate those things which you left out for fear of wearying your readers, but which I and many others are eager to hear.

Indeed, Postumian (said I) long ago, while I was listening to your account of the virtues and mighty works of the saints ; my thoughts tacitly recurred to my Martin ; and I clearly saw, that he united in himself all that those other saints shared among

\* Agreeable stories. The legends of the saints were the novels of the Church. Mankind love and will have something of the sort—mother Church supplied her children, from the fourth century downwards, with a great abundance of holy fictions, quite as marvellous as the Arabian tales. Mother Rome still feeds their imaginations with the same nutriment both old and new.

them ; for although you have related great things, yet (be it said with due respect to those eminent saints) I have heard nothing from you in which Martin is inferior to the best of them.

17. But when I profess that no one's virtue is comparable to Martin's, this must be taken into consideration, that he labored under disadvantages from which the hermits and anchorites are free. They meet with no impediments, and they learn to do mighty works with nothing but heaven and the angels in view. But Martin stood invincibly firm in virtue against all sorts of temptation, living as he did in the midst of his people and daily conversing with them ; having to deal also with a factious and wrangling clergy, and with a set of fierce and overbearing bishops ; and moreover, being daily harrassed with scandals and misdeeds on every hand : yet did he effect greater things than even the best of those who have lived in the desert, and whose works have been reported. And had they equalled his performances, what judge would be so unjust as not to assign him the superior merit. For, consider him as a soldier who has fought on disadvantageous ground, and who has nevertheless gained the victory. Compare them also to soldiers who have contended on equal or superior ground. What then ? All may be equally victorious, but do not deserve equal praise. I said,—equally victorious : but although you have mentioned notable miracles, yet you have given no instance of raising the dead to life. In this particular at least, you must confess that none is comparable to Martin. For if it be a wonderful thing, that the flame did not touch the Egyptian who went into the oven ;—Martin too had power over the fire. If you bear in mind that the ferocity of wild beasts was tamed by the anchorites ;—with him too it was an ordinary thing to quell the rage of beasts and the poison of serpents. If, again, you bring to the comparison the man who with a word, or with a piece of fringe from his cloak, cured those who were possessed with unclean spirits ; not even in this particular was Martin inferior, as many instances would show. If, again, you recur to him who, covered with his own hair instead of a coat, was supposed to be

visited by angels ;—so, with Martin, angels conversed every day. Then, too, he kept his mind so free from vanity and ostentation, that no man more heartily despised these vices, while he also cured those who were possessed by unclean spirits, and mostly too when absent. Nor did he command counts only and governors, but even kings themselves :—but this was indeed a very small thing compared with those miracles : but you may believe that no one more powerfully resisted, not vanity only, but the occasions and incentives of vanity.

18. What I am going to relate is a trifling affair, certainly, but still worthy of mention ; because he is worthy of praise who so piously desired to show reverence to the blessed man. I remember that Vincentius, the governor, a man of as excellent virtues as any in Gaul, often, when he would be passing through Tours, requested Martin to give him a feast in his monastery ; alleging as a precedent, that Saint Ambrose, the bishop, was said in his time to have now and then entertained consuls and prefects. But Martin, a man of higher mind, refused, lest from this cause he might be insensibly puffed up with vanity. You must confess then, that Martin had all the virtues of all the saints that you have mentioned, but that they had not all the virtues of Martin. “ True, (said Postumian,) but why argue thus with me, as if I were not always of the same opinion ? ” Indeed, while I live, and keep my senses, I will always commend the monks of Egypt, praise the anchorites, and admire the hermits ; but I will always except Martin as incomparably superior to any monk, and certainly to any bishop whomsoever. The Egyptian confesses this, and so does the Syrian : the Ethiopian knows it, the Indian has heard it ; the Parthian and the Persian have learned it : neither is Armenia ignorant of it ; the secluded Bosphorus has been informed of it ; and so, finally, has any one who frequents the Fortunate Islands,\* or the Icy Ocean. How much more misera-

\* The Bosphorus [signifying *Ox-Ferry*] is well known to be the narrow strait between Constantinople and the Black Sea. The Fortunate Islands are now called the Canaries.

ble this country of ours, which has so great a man in it, and yet has not done itself the honor of knowing him. I impute not this crime to the people : it is the clergy and bishops alone who do not know him. But they have their reasons : through envy they are not willing to know him : because, if they knew his virtues, they would know their own vices. I shudder to tell what I heard a wretch, I know not who, assert : that you had told many lies in that book of yours.\* That is not a man's assertion but the Devil's ; nor does the assertion detract from Martin's reputation, but it derogates from the truth of the gospel. For since the Lord Jesus himself testified that works, such as Martin did, should be performed by all the faithful ; he who believes not that Martin did them, believes not that Christ said those things. But the degenerate, sleepy wretches are ashamed to acknowledge, that he did what they are themselves unable to do, and would rather deny his miracles, than confess their own slothfulness.

19. But as we are hastening to other matters, let us drop all remembrance of these men. Do you rather, as I have desired, give a connected account of the remaining works of Martin.

But (said I) you had better, I think, call upon Gallus ; he knows more than I do (for being a disciple of Martin, he cannot be ignorant of his master's acts,) and he owes this good turn both to Martin and to ourselves ; for as I published a book, and you have related the acts of the Oriental monks, let him now, in his turn, give us the desired history.

20. Certainly, (said Gallus,) though unequal to so great a task, the examples of obedience mentioned by Postumian, constrain me not to refuse the office which you have laid upon me. But when I consider that I am a man of Gaul and about to speak before Aquitanians, I fear lest my rustic dialect should offend more polished ears ; nevertheless, you shall hear me speak like a numb-

\* The frequent allusions of Sulpicius to the disbelief of his neighbors in the reported miracles of Martin, are sufficient to discredit them, for they were Christians who disbelieved them, though some of them may have been envious men.

skull, without aiming at the lofty style of a tragedian; for if you allow me to be a disciple of Martin, you must also grant me the liberty of despising, as he did, all the vain trappings and ornaments of language.

Well then, (said Postumian,) you may speak Celtic or Gallic,\* if you choose, so you speak of Martin; for I assure you, that if you were even dumb on other occasions, you would not want words and eloquence when Martin was the subject; just as the tongue of Zacharias was loosed by the name of John the Baptist. But as you are a scholar, so like a scholar, you artfully excuse your want of skill, because you excel in eloquence. But it becomes not a monk to be so crafty, nor a Gaul to be so sharp-witted. But begin rather the history that is before you; we have trifled too long, for now the lengthened shadows admonish us that it is almost sunset.

After we had all been silent for a little while, Gallus thus began, "I must beware, in the first place, not to repeat anything that Sulpicius has recorded in his book. Therefore I pass over the history of Martin's early life, and what he did while he was a layman, and while he was a monk; nor will I mention anything that I heard from others, but rather confine myself to what I myself witnessed.

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## DIALOGUE II.

### ON THE MIRACLES OF MARTIN.

WHEN first, after leaving school, I joined myself to the blessed man, we followed him in a few days to the church. There a half-naked poor man met him, and the weather being cold, he

\* Celtic, the old primitive language of Gaul, still spoken by the peasantry in the year 400; Gallic, a mixed dialect of Celtic and Latin, which had grown up in and about the cities where Latin was spoken by the educated classes. Our author gives an exaggerated account of the circulation of his *Life of St. Martin*; but we may well believe that such a romance of monkery would be very popular throughout the Church.



begged for a garment. Martin called to the archdeacon,\* and ordered him to clothe the shivering beggar without delay. He then entered his closet and sat down alone, according to his custom; for even in the church he procured this privacy by dismissing his clergy. These were now seated in another closet, either conversing familiarly or attending to business, whilst Martin kept his privacy until the usual hour of public service. I will not omit to remark, that when seated in his closet he never used a chair. No one ever saw *him* seated in the church, as I lately saw one for whom I blushed, sitting aloft (the Lord is my witness) on a throne grand enough for a king's judgment seat. But Martin sat on what we rustics of Gaul denominate a three-legged stool, but which you scholars, especially Postumian who has been in Greece, would dignify with the name of *tripod*. Into this privacy of the blessed man that beggar burst, with the complaint, that the archdeacon had not given him the coat, and that he was suffering from cold. The saint instantly turned himself about, so that the beggar could not see what he did, slipped off his coat from under his cloak, and putting it on the beggar, told him to depart. Soon afterwards the archdeacon came in, and admonished him that he ought to go and commence the services in the church, where the people were waiting for him. He answered that the poor man (meaning himself) ought first to be clothed; that he could not enter the church until the poor man got a coat. The deacon understood him not; for as Martin had his cloak about him, his want of an inner garment was not observed; therefore the deacon excused himself by saying that the poor man had disappeared. Then, said Martin, bring me the garment that you have prepared; there will be no want of a poor man to be clothed. The clergyman, thus driven into a corner and obliged to comply, became spiteful, and going into a neighboring shop he snatched up a carter's frock, short, rough,

\* The arch, or chief deacon assisted the bishop in some of his duties, such as visitation, and was treasurer of the diocese.

and priced at five shillings, and coming in an ill humor, spread it out before Martin's feet. "Here is the coat (said he); but the poor man is not here." Martin composedly ordered him to stand a little while outside of the door, that he might be alone when he put on the coat, using all his endeavors to conceal what he had done. But when holy men conceal such things, all is betrayed, whether they will or not, to the curiosity of others.

2. So Martin came forth to offer sacrifice to God, clothed in this garment. On this same day, while he was blessing the altar, according to custom, we saw a wonderful sight; a globe of fire started from his head, and shooting aloft, the flame streamed out so as apparently to lengthen his neck and hair. This prodigy, though it occurred on a public day and before a great assembly, was seen by none of us except one of the virgins, one presbyter, and three monks.\* Why the rest saw it not I am unable to say.

3. About the same time my uncle Evantius, a zealous Christian, though occupied with worldly business, became grievously sick, and was at the point of death, when he sent for Martin, who hastened to obey the call. But before the blessed man had gone over half the distance, the sick man felt the virtue of his approach, and recovering health every instant, he came forth to meet us. On the next day, when Martin wished to return, he detained him with earnest entreaties. Meanwhile a servant boy was bitten by a venomous serpent. When he was likely to die of the poison, Evantius had him carried in and laid at the saint's feet, alleging that nothing was impossible to him. The poison was now diffused through all the members; the skin was bloated with universal swellings, and his entrails were distended like a blown bladder. Martin put forth his hand and felt every part of the body, and then applied his finger to the wound. Wonderful to

\* Here we find a very ancient example of what has often occurred in modern times among the Roman Catholics. Some miraculous appearance takes place before a public assembly, but is visible to no eyes but those of one or a few. Generally some superstitious, imaginative nun or monk sees it first; and then often one or more others are ready to swear that they saw it too!

relate ! we saw the poison, mixed with blood, flow from all parts to Martin's finger, and spurt from the little orifice of the wound in a long stream, like milk when pressed from the full udder of a goat or sheep. The boy rose up well ; and we, astonished at the miracle, confessed the undeniable truth, that no man under heaven could imitate Martin's works.

4. Some time afterwards, we attended him on a visitation through the diocese. In our journeyings we happened once to fall a little distance behind him, when he met, on a public causeway raised by embankments, a large party of soldiers with a treasure wagon. The beasts, frightened at seeing Martin on one side of the way, with his long, black, rough cloak hanging about him, turned off towards the other side of the road, and the ropes of their harness getting entangled, they fell into confusion. The difficulty of getting them into order again caused delay, which made the impatient soldiers dismount in a rage, and begin to beat Martin unmercifully with whips and cudgels. When he took it all in mute patience, and offered his back to the smiters, they were only the more enraged at his apparent contempt of their flogging. When we came up, we found him fallen senseless upon the ground, all over lacerated and bloody. We lifted him quickly upon his ass, and hastened to get away from a place which we execrated for the beating which Martin had suffered. Meanwhile those men returned to the carriage, their rage being satiated, and commanded the beasts to be driven onwards. But the animals stood fixed to the spot like brazen statues ; nor would they move for all the whipping and shouting that their masters could use. The men all fell to and lashed away until they wore out their Gallic mule-whips. Then they tore down all the neighboring wood, and pounded the brutes with heavy poles. But all their cruelty was of no avail ; the brutes were unmovable. The miserable men knew not what to do. They could no longer avoid the acknowledgment, stony-hearted though they were, that a Divine power detained them. At last, coming to their senses, they began to inquire of some travellers who it was that they had

beaten a little while before. When they learned that it was Martin whom they had so cruelly beaten, they saw at once that their ill treatment of him was the cause of their detention. Therefore, they all followed us with hasty steps, confused with the conscious shame of their criminal deed. Weeping and covered with dust, which they had sprinkled upon their heads in tokens of penitence, they prostrated themselves before Martin's knees, begging forgiveness, and intreating that he would let them go their way; saying that they were sufficiently punished by the mere consciousness of their guilt, well knowing that they deserved to be swallowed up alive by the earth, or rather to be changed into stiff and senseless rocks, that the beasts might see them fixed to the spot where they had stood; therefore they prayed and besought him to pardon their wickedness, and grant them the power of going on their way. The blessed man had been sensible before they ran up to him, of their miraculous detention, and had told us so; nevertheless, he mercifully pardoned them, and permitted them to pursue their way, with their beasts restored to a state of activity.

5. But, Sulpicius, we have to remark what Martin was accustomed to say to you: that after he became bishop, he had by no means the same grace of miracles that he remembered to have had before. If this be true, or, rather, because it is true, we can conjecture how great were the things which he had done when he was a private monk, and which he performed alone in secrecy, since we have seen how great are the miracles which he wrought while bishop, and before the eyes of all. Many, indeed, of his performances were known to the world before, and could not be hidden; but innumerable more he kept secret, that he might avoid boasting, and would not suffer to become known, because, being himself exalted above mere humanity, and treading the glory of the world under his feet, in the consciousness of his power, he was satisfied to have heaven alone for a witness. This we may also judge to be true, from the facts that have come to our knowledge, and could not be concealed, namely, that

before his episcopate he raised two men from the dead, as you have related more fully in your book ; but, during his episcopate he raised only one—a fact which I wonder you omitted to mention, but of which I am a witness, that is, if you do not doubt my competency. But I will unfold to you the manner in which it was done. For some cause—I forget what it was—we were going to the town of Carnotis.\* Whilst we were passing by a certain village, crowded with inhabitants, an immense multitude came forth to meet us. All were Pagans ; for in that village no one knew Christ. Yet the fame of so great a man had brought forth a gathering multitude that covered all the plain around. Here Martin felt that he had a work to do, and he shuddered all over when the spirit announced it to him. He preached the word of God in language above human ; and often groaned to think that such a multitude should be ignorant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst the vast multitude was around us, a certain woman, whose son had died a little before, began to hold the dead body up in her arms to the blessed man, saying, We know that thou art the friend of God—restore to me my son, for he is my only son. The rest of the multitude joined the mother in her loud petitions. Then Martin, seeing, as he afterwards told us, that for the salvation of the expecting crowd, he could perform the work, took the dead body into his own hands, and whilst all were looking on, he bent his knees, and when his prayer was finished, he arose and restored the child alive to his mother. Then, indeed, the multitude, with a shout that arose to heaven, confessed Christ to be the Lord. Finally, they all came by companies, and hastily kneeling before the blessed man, demanded, as believers, that he should make them Christians. Without delay, in the plain where he was, he made them catechumens, by laying his hands on them. Then turning to us, he said that it was not unreasonable to make catechumens in an open field, for in such places martyrs were usually consecrated. You have con-

\* Generally written, Carnutes, now Chartres.

quered, cried Postumian; Oh, Gallus, you have conquered: not me, indeed, who am rather a supporter of Martin, and have always known and believed all these things concerning him; but you have conquered all the eremites and anchorites. No one of them, like this Martin of yours, and of mine, too, has ruled over death. With reason, therefore, has this Sulpicius compared him with the Apostles and Prophets. The power of his faith and his miraculous works, prove him to be like them in everything. But go on, I pray you; for though we can hear nothing more magnificent, yet go on, Gallus, to unfold whatever remains to be told of Martin, for my mind is in haste to learn even his small and every day affairs; for undoubtedly his smallest actions exceed the greatest of others.

I will do so, said Gallus; but I did not myself see what I am next to relate, for it occurred before I joined him. But the fact is well known, and has been often spoken of by the faithful brethren who were present.

6. About the time when he was first appointed bishop, he had to attend the imperial court. Valentinian, the elder, who then held the supreme power, having heard that Martin came to ask what he was unwilling to grant, ordered the doors of the palace to be shut against him, for, in addition to the pride and cruelty of his own mind, his wife Arriana had exercised her influence to determine him against showing due reverence to the holy man. Therefore, Martin, after he had once and again tried in vain to get access to the proud emperor, resorted to his well-known resources. He rolls himself up in his haircloth, sprinkles himself with ashes, abstains from food and drink, and prays whole days and nights without ceasing. At last, on the seventh day an angel stood before him, and commanded him to go securely to the palace, under the assurance that the imperial doors, however they might be closed, should open of their own accord, and that the proud spirit of the emperor should be softened. Therefore, confiding in the word of the angel before him, and in his assistance in the enterprise, he seeks the palace. The doors are open; no

one opposes his entrance ; and he comes finally to the emperor himself, no one forbidding him. When the emperor saw him coming at a distance, he was enraged at his being admitted, and by no means paid him the respect of rising at his approach, until a fire seized the royal seat, and the flame scorched that part of the royal person which was in contact with the seat ; so the proud emperor was compelled to rise from his throne, and unwillingly to do honor to Martin. He then saluted, with many embraces, the man whom he had determined to spurn ; and acknowledged himself bettered by having felt the power of God. Nor did he wait for Martin's requests before he granted him all that he should ask. He afterwards invited him frequently to converse and feast with him. Finally, at the blessed man's departure, he offered him many gifts, which Martin, as usual, declined, that he might guard his poverty from temptation.

And now that we have entered the palace, we may as well mention some other transactions which occurred there at different times ; for we ought not, I think, to pass over the example of a faithful queen, who manifested her admiration of Martin.

7. The Emperor Maximus then ruled in Gaul—a man commendable for every sort of merit, if he had been allowed to reject the crown imposed on him by the tumultuary soldiery, and to abstain from civil war. But the supreme command could neither be safely refused nor maintained without arms. He oftentimes sent for Martin, and received him into the palace with respect and veneration. His whole conversation with him was of things present and future—of the glory of the faithful and of the immortality of the soul. Meanwhile the queen hung day and night upon the lips of Martin, and came not short of the example mentioned in the gospel ; for she washed the feet of the saint with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Martin, whom no woman had ever touched, could not avoid her assiduity and her servility. She thought nothing of princely wealth, of imperial dignity, of diadem or purple. She could not be dragged from the place where she lay at Martin's

feet. At last she requested of her husband, and he joined her in beseeching Martin, that she alone, with no witness present, might give him a feast. Nor could the blessed man hold out in obstinately refusing her request. The chaste preparations were made by her own hands. She spread a cover over the couch,\* set the table, and furnished water for the hands. Then she placed on the table the food which she had cooked herself. Whilst he was reclining at table, she stood at a distance, after the manner of waiting maids, with her eyes bent upon the floor, exhibiting, in everything the modesty and humility of a servant. She mixed his drink for him, and then handed it to him. When the frugal supper was ended, she gathered the remnants and crumbs of bread, preferring, as became a believer, these fragments to the imperial feasts. Blessed woman! For such pious affection deserves to be compared in merit with hers who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, if we regard simply the facts. But if we be allowed to compare the faith of these two queens (as I may be allowed to say, apart from the grandeur of the mystery), the former sought to hear a wise man; but the latter, not content to have heard only, had the additional merit of acting as the wise man's servant.

Here, Postumian says, "Gallus, for some time, whilst hearing you speak, I have been admiring the empress's faith. But what becomes of the statement that no woman was ever allowed to stand close to Martin? Behold now, this woman not only stood near him but waited on him. I am afraid that those who mingle freely with women, may fortify themselves by this example."

Gallus says in reply, why do you not look at what the grammarians usually teach,—the place, the time and the person? Figure to yourself one caught in the imperial palace, solicited by the emperor's prayers, urged by the queen's faith, compelled by the necessity of the case to comply, that he might gain the object of

\* Some readers may need to be informed that the Romans did not sit at table as we do, but reclined upon couches or beds, supporting themselves on one elbow while they eat.



his visit to court, the deliverance of prisoners, the recall of exiles, and the restoration of confiscated property to the unfortunate. The bishop must have set a low value on these objects, if for their sake he had refused to relax somewhat the rigor of his rule. Nevertheless, as you judge that some may be disposed to make an ill use of this example, they will be happy indeed, if in all things they follow the exemplary discipline of this man. Let them bear in mind that Martin once only, and that when he was seventy years of age, suffered—not a widow nor a wanton girl—but a queen in the house with her husband and at their joint request, to wait on him at table. She stood by him, but she did not recline with him at the table, nor even partake of the feast. Learn the rule then : Let a matron serve, not command you ; let her serve, but not recline with you ; as Martha of the gospel ministered unto the Lord, but was not called to partake with him :—nay, Mary that listened to his word was preferred to her that ministered. But in Martin's case the queen did both ; she ministered like Martha, and listened like Mary. Let him, then, who would use this example, conform to it in every particular. Let the occasion be similar, and such the person, the service, the feast, and this, too, but once in a life-time.\*

“ Very properly,” said Postumian, “ does your argument restrict those men of ours from going too far by Martin's example. But I tell you plainly that this argument will fall upon deaf ears. For if we followed the ways of Martin we should not have to plead about the practise of kissing, and we should be free from the reproach of a bad name.—But as you say, when accused of voracity, we are Gauls : so in regard to this matter, we acknowledge that we shall never be corrected either by Martin's example or by your arguments. But whilst we are all this time discussing these matters, why are you, Sulpicius, so obstinately silent ?”

\* Severus in his eagerness to apologize for Martin's compliance with the disgusting servility of the empress, overstates his age. He was not so much as seventy ; but we think it unnecessary to discuss the matter.

For my part, said I, not only am I now silent, but I have been for a long time disposed to say nothing on this subject: for ever since I scolded a certain runagate, pretty, money-spending widow for living rather wantonly;—and likewise a virgin who stuck too closely to a certain young man, a dear friend of mine; though I had heard her frequently herself chiding other men who did such things;—I have stirred up against myself such a hatred both of *all the women and of all the monks*, that both legions have leagued themselves together to make war upon me. So I beseech you, say no more, lest even this that you are saying should be turned to my disadvantage. Leave off all mention of these things, and let us return rather to the history of Martin. Do you, Gallus, as you have begun, finish the work that you have undertaken.

Then he continued thus: I have told you so much already, that my narrative ought to have satisfied your eager desires: but as I cannot rightly refuse to comply with your wish, I will talk on during the rest of the day. For of a surety, whilst I look upon that straw which is prepared for our beds, I am reminded of the straw on which Martin had lain, became the instrument of a miracle. The thing happened after this manner.

8. *Claudiomachus* is a village on the border between the *Bituriges* and the *Turones*.\* In this place is a church celebrated for the piety of its saints; nor is there a less glorious multitude of holy virgins. Therefore, Martin, passing that way, took up his lodging in the vestry-room of the church. After his departure, all the virgins rushed into the room,—*licked every place where the blessed man had either sat or stood*; and divided among themselves the straw on which he had lain.† One of them a few days after—

\* The Latin form of Tours, Martin cites, is *Turones*; which is also the name of a tribe of Gauls. The *Bituriges* were their neighbors on the south-east.

† The reader may judge from the nasty devotion of these women, what makes a glorious company of holy virgins in the eyes of a genuine monk. Many virgins of these times were censured for being fond of kissing young

wards hung some of the straw, which she had collected as a blessing for herself, about the neck of a demoniac, possessed of a spirit of error. Forthwith, in less time than I shall take to tell it, the person was purified by the ejection of the demon.

9. About the same time, Martin, as he was returning from Treves, was met by a heifer driven mad by a demon ; which wandering from the herd, attacked men, and had hurt many by running upon them with her horns. When she approached us, those who followed her at a distance, began to call out that we should beware of her. But after she came nigher, raging with fiery eyes, Martin lifted up his hand towards her, and commanded the brute to stop. Forthwith at his word, she stood stock still. Meanwhile Martin, seeing a demon riding on her back, chides him, saying, begone, fiend, and let the innocent brute alone ! The malignant spirit obeyed and went away. The cow had the sense to understand that she was delivered by St. Martin. Being restored to peace, she kneeled before her deliverer, and then at his command she sought the herd, and mingled with the other cattle, gentler now than a sheep.

This was the time when he was enveloped in flames without feeling the heat ; but I need not tell of this, as our Sulpicius has fully related the circumstances in his epistles to Eusebius the presbyter. We shall relate only what he has omitted.

10. At a certain time when he was making the visitation of his diocese, we met a company of hunters. The dogs were chasing a hare ; and now the poor little beast, exhausted by the length of its run, whilst the open fields around offered no place of refuge, and on the point of being caught, gained a momentary respite from death only by frequent doublings ; the saint with pious mind pitying the danger of the hare, commands the dogs to desist from the pursuit and let the flying animal escape. The dogs stopped immediately at the first word of command, as if they were

men ; but when they lick the dirt consecrated by filthy old Martin's touch, they are glorious virgins !

tied fast : so the poor little hare got safely away from its arrested pursuers.

It is worth while also to relate some of his familiar sayings, that were seasoned with a spiritual wit.

11. He happened to see a sheep that had been newly shorn. She has fulfilled the gospel precept (said he) ; she had two coats, and she has given one of them to him that had none : so should ye do likewise.

Another time he saw a swineherd, chilled with cold and imperfectly clothed with a garment of skin. Behold (said he) Adam cast out of paradise and feeding swine, clothed in skins. But let us rather lay aside this old Adam which remains on him, and put on the new Adam.

Cattle had pastured the meadows in part, but swine had rooted up a part of what remained unpastured. The part which remained uninjured was enameled with a variety of flowers. That part (said he) which has been fed down by the cows, is an emblem of marriage. If it has not entirely lost the ornament of herbage, yet it retains not the beauty of flowers. Those parts which the unclean swine have rooted up, present us with the filthy image of fornication. But that part which has sustained no injury, exhibits the glory of virginity : it luxuriates with a fruitful crop of grasses, adorned with flowers that shine like precious stones : a beautiful sight and worthy of God. Nothing is comparable to virginity. But they who compare marriage to fornication grossly err ; whilst they who esteem marriage equal to virginity, are miserable and downright fools. But wise men should observe this distinction, that marriage is excusable, virginity glorious, and fornication consigned to punishment unless atoned for by penance.

12. A certain soldier, on making the profession of a monk, had cast away his belt in the church, and had built himself a cell in a retired situation, as if he would be a hermit. Meanwhile the crafty enemy was agitating his carnal breast with various thoughts : his mind undergoing a change, he desired that his wife whom

Martin had consigned to a nunnery, should come and live with him. The sturdy hermit went, therefore, to St. Martin and confessed what he had in view. The saint gave him a vehement refusal, saying that it was out of all rule for the woman to live with him again, now that he was a monk and no more a husband. Finally, when the soldier insisted, saying that this would not injure his vow, as he desired only the comfort of his wife's society; moreover, there was no cause to fear that they would fall into their former vices, because he was now the soldier of Christ, and she had taken the same oath of fidelity in this holy war; and that the bishop should suffer the saints who by faith had become ignorant of sex to carry on the war together. Then Martin spoke these words, which I give you exactly: "Tell me, have you ever been in a campaign and stood in the line of battle?" "Oftentimes," said the soldier. "Well, then," said Martin, "tell me this; in that line of battle, already armed for the encounter, and approaching the enemy with swords drawn, did you ever see a woman fighting side by side with the soldiers?" This at last made the soldier blush for shame. He thanked Martin for refusing his erroneous request, and for convincing him by a solid argument drawn from military affairs, instead of rebuking him with sharp words. But Martin, turning to us monks, who in large numbers had surrounded him, said, "As women may not enter the camp of men, let the line of battle stand separate, while the woman sits in her tent afar off: for the army would become contemptible, if a crowd of women were allowed to intermingle with the cohorts of men. The soldier may stand in the ranks and march to the field; but let the woman confine herself within the walls. She too has her glory, if she preserve her chastity during her husband's absence. Her first virtue and her consummate victory is, not to be seen."

13. You remember, I presume, Sulpicius, how he praised the virgin who shut herself up so completely that she refused to see even himself when he called on her as bishop. On passing by her little country house, in which she had chastely confined her-

self for many years, the fame of her virtue influenced him to turn aside, that he might as bishop pay due honor to a girl of such illustrious merit. For a prelate of such great name to lay aside something of his own strictness to pay her a visit, would be giving a distinguished testimony of her virtue. But she relaxed not the bonds of her vow, even to see such a man as Martin. When he received through another woman her apology for not seeing him, he departed full of joy. Oh glorious virgin, who would not be seen by Martin! Oh blessed Martin, who deemed not this refusal an insult, but magnifying her virtue, only rejoiced that such a rare example should be found in those regions! Then as the approach of night compelled us to take up our lodging in the neighborhood, that same virgin sent us a gift of hospitality.\* Martin out of respect to her accepted the present, contrary to his general rule, which was, never to accept a gift; but he considered that a blessing from this venerable virgin was not to be refused; he deemed it to be of more value than that of many presbyters. I beseech all the virgins to mind this example, and in order to exclude bad men, to shut their doors against even the clergy. Let all the world hear this: a virgin refused to let Martin see her—even Martin, whom to see is salvation! This was not done out of disrespect to the clergy; but what clergyman except Martin would not have taken it as an injury? Another would have been enraged; he would have launched anathemas against her as a heretic. How much would he have preferred to this holy soul, those virgins who throw themselves in the way of a clergyman, provide sumptuous entertainments for him, and recline with him at table! But whither is my discourse wandering? To avoid offence, such free speech must be checked: for to the unfaithful, words of rebuke are unprofitable: but for the faithful, the bare example may suffice. But I will proclaim the virtue of this virgin, so as not to derogate, as I suppose, from those who

\* Those who gave hospitality often added a present to their guests when they departed.

came from distant regions to see Martin ; since angels themselves have been often prompted by the same feelings to visit him.

14. But that which I am about to tell you, Postumian, I can prove by a competent witness. (He looked at me as he spoke.) On a certain day, I and Sulpicius were keeping watch before his door, and had been sitting silently for some hours, with a shuddering and awful sensation, as if we kept an appointed watch before an angel's tent. In fact, as the door of his cell was closed, he knew not that we were there. Meanwhile we heard the murmur of persons in conversation. We were soon overspread with a feeling of awe, and overcome with a numbness, which proved the presence of something divine, we knew not what. After some two hours Martin came out to us, and then when Sulpicius—than whom no one was more familiar with Martin—began to pray that he would satisfy our curiosity by informing us what caused that supernatural shuddering which we acknowledged ourselves to have felt, whilst he was conversing with some persons in his cell, for we could hear a low and scarcely understood conversation from our station before the door. Then he, after a long pause,—for Sulpicius could draw anything from him, however reluctant he might be to tell it—I am going to tell incredible things ; but as Christ is my witness I lie not, unless some one should be sacrilegious enough to say that Martin lied ;—"I will tell you—said he, but I beseech you tell no one else :\* Agnes, Theckla and Mary have been with me."† He described also

\* This charge to tell no one—if truly stated—was a piece of ridiculous affectation in blessed Martin. He knew that Sulpicius had written, or was writing, his life for publication ; yet he tells him everything, and then says, Don't tell any body !

† The virgin Mary, one of these celestial companions of Martin, is known to all our readers. Theckla is a traditional character, a virgin said to have been converted by St. Paul, to have suffered martyrdom by the agency of a rich young nobleman to whom she had been espoused, but whom she afterwards refused to marry, choosing to remain a virgin after her conversion. St. Agnes was a virgin of twelve years old, said to have calmly suffered martyrdom under the emperor Diocletian in the third century.

their singular countenance and dress. He confessed also that he had been visited by them frequently before : by the apostles Peter and Paul, also. Now demons too would rail at him in their own names, as each appeared before him. He suffered most annoyance from Mercury ; Jupiter, he said, was a dull and stupid fellow.

These things appeared incredible to most of those who lived in the same monastery ; nor will I be confident that all who hear them will give them credit. For unless Martin had led a life and shown a virtue beyond all esteem, he could by no means be deemed worthy of such glory ; and it is no wonder that human weakness should doubt of his miraculous deeds ; since we see many in these days who do not believe even the gospel histories. But we have both seen and felt that Martin was often familiarly visited by angels. It is a small matter that I am going to relate ; yet I will relate it.

15. A synod of bishops was being held at Nemansus.\* He would not attend it, but was desirous to know what was done there. By chance this Sulpicius was then on a voyage with him. Martin, as he was wont, sat in a retired part of the ship by himself. Here an angel told him what had been done in the synod. We afterwards inquired diligently, and ascertained that on the very day in question, the synod was in session and passed the decrees which the angel had announced to Martin.

16. When we inquired of him concerning the end of the world, he told us that Nero and Antichrist must come first ; that Nero in the western regions shall rule over ten conquered kings, and that he will exercise persecution in order to enforce the worship

Respecting this story of Sulpicius, it is enough to say that, as he himself admits immediately afterwards, the majority even of the monks in Martin's own monastery, had no faith in it and other stories of the same kind ; we may therefore be satisfied of its falsehood : for what even St. Martin's monks could not swallow, we may safely reject. Yet Tillemont in his *Memoirs* says it is undoubtedly true !

\* Now Nismes, in the south of France.



of idols; that Antichrist shall assume the empire of the East, make Jerusalem the seat of his government, and that the city and temple should be rebuilt by him; that the object of his persecution will be to have Christ the Lord denied and himself acknowledged as Christ; that he will command all to be circumcised according to the law of Moses; that Nero himself will in the end be cut off by Antichrist—under whose dominion all the nations of the earth are to be reduced—until the impious tyrant shall himself be crushed by the coming of Christ; that undoubtedly Antichrist, begotten by an evil spirit, will be set up in his boyish years, and will at the lawful age assume the empire.

It is now the eighth year since I heard these things from Martin. Judge then how suddenly may fall out those things that shall come to pass.\*

Whilst Gallus was thus going on with his narrative, and had not concluded what he meant to relate, a servant boy entered and said that Refrigerius, the presbyter, was standing without the door.

\* Here we have the current opinions of the age concerning the end of the world, and the events that should precede it. The notion that the cruel tyrant Nero, who was emperor in the first century, should reappear as Antichrist, originated in a rumor circulated after his death, that he had escaped from his assassins, and would reappear as emperor. The notion that the end of the world was near, was borrowed from the Alexandrian Jews. The opinion had been started among the Jews, that as God had employed six days in making the world, so he would employ six thousand years in governing it; after which he would put an end to the present system of the world and introduce a new one. According to the chronology of our Hebrew Bible, this would not take place till two thousand years after the Christian era: but according to the Greek Septuagint, which gives a different chronology, and was the Bible commonly used in the Eastern Churches, it ought to have taken place about the year 200 after Christ; but as it had not yet occurred in Martin's time, it was supposed to be certainly at hand. The event shows that St. Martin, who spoke so oracularly on the subject, was no more divinely inspired than our modern *prophetizers* (as we choose to call them) whose voluminous and never-ending hallucinations about the Millenium and the End of the World, have done and are doing serious injury to our Christian faith. How much better, if they would adopt the modest confession of Nathaniel Lardner:—"I do not understand the Apocalypse."

We began to doubt whether we should hear Gallus further, or go out to meet a most welcome brother, who had come to us upon the business of his office. Then said Gallus, though we should not leave off this discourse for the arrival of a holy priest, the night would now compel us to finish this long discourse. But as all the mighty works of Martin could not be unfolded, let these suffice you to-day : to-morrow you shall have the rest. When Gallus had given us this answer we arose.

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### DIALOGUE III.\*

#### THE MIRACLES OF MARTIN—CONTINUED.

THE day dawns, Gallus ; it is time to rise : for you see, here is Postumian ready, and this presbyter too, who was yesterday admitted to your auditory, waiting for you to relate, according to promise, what remains to be told concerning our Martin. He is not ignorant of these matters ; yet the rehearsal of what is already known is pleasant to one's remembrance ; for human nature is so constituted that one delights to obtain a clearer and more vivid conception of things known by the testimony of others to be certainly true. Now this man having been from early youth a follower of Martin, is acquainted with everything ; but he willingly refreshes his knowledge by hearing the story again. For Gallus, I will confess to you that I have often heard the account of Martin's miracles, seeing that I have written many things concerning him ; yet such is my admiration of his works, that they are always new, even such as have been often heard before, and often revolved in my mind. We rejoice the more, that our friend Postumian, who is soon to return to the East, will receive of you the true account of these facts, and will carry it with him signed and sealed as it were, by authentic witnesses. Whilst I was saying this, and Gallus was now ready to resume his narrative, a crowd of monks

\* We have omitted some uninteresting chapters of this Dialogue.

rushed in ; Evagrius, the presbyter, Aper, Sebastian, Agricola, and a little afterwards our presbyter Etherius entered with Calpion the deacon and Amator the subdeacon.\* Finally, my very dear Aurelian, the presbyter, came running from a distance, panting for breath. How is this, said I, that you all come running together so suddenly, and from such divers quarters? "We heard yesterday," said they, "that Gallus here was all day long relating the miracles of Martin, and when night came, had deferred the rest until to-day. Therefore we have hurried hither, that we might hear one who was speaking on so great a theme." Then said Aper, "It is not fit that we should be joined with them; because they have come to listen more from curiosity than from piety." Troubled with the care of those who should not, as he thought, be admitted, I with difficulty got permission for Eucharis, one of the vicars,† and Celsus, who had been consul, to stay: the rest were turned away. Then we set Gallus on a seat in the middle. After he had, with noble modesty, kept silence for a while, he began, after this manner :

You have met, said he, to hear me : and though you are both holy and learned, you have brought, I trust, religious rather than learned ears ; for you will not hear me speak, I can assure you, with the eloquence of an orator. I will not repeat what I related yesterday. They who were not present may learn those things from writings hereafter. Postumian expects something new to the East ; that the people there may not, when they take Martin into the comparison, prefer their own saints to those in the West. And first, my mind inclines me to relate what Refrigerius has just suggested in a whisper.

\* There were three degrees of the deacon's office : subdeacon, deacon and archdeacon ; so much did a worldly church multiply her offices.

† Vicarius or vicar is a general term, denoting a person who discharges the duties of another's office, civil or ecclesiastical. The bishops in these times had vicars who attended to the bishop's duties in the villages, and hence among the Greeks called *chor episcopi*, or village bishops. Another sort in the cathedral churches sang high mass, &c. instead of the bishops. See Du Fresne's Glossary, at the words *Chor Episcopi* and *Vicarius*.

2. The affair took place in the city of Carnatina. A father had twelve daughters, the youngest of whom was dumb. He presented the girl to Martin, beseeching that by his merits as a saint, he would loose her tongue. Martin deferring to the bishops Valentinian and Victricius, who then happened to be at his side, confessed himself unequal to such an undertaking, but gave the opinion that nothing would be impossible to those who were holier than himself. But they joining their pious prayers with those of the father, besought Martin to perform what was expected of him. He made no farther delay—acting well, both in showing humility and in not putting off a deed of piety—he orders the surrounding multitude to be removed, and when only the bishops and the father stood by him, he prostrated himself in prayer as he was accustomed to do; then he blessed a little oil with the form of words used in exorcising, and then poured the consecrated liquor into her mouth, holding her tongue with his fingers. The event did not disappoint the saint's expectation. He asked the girl what her father's name was: she soon gave the answer. The father utters an exclamation of joy and sheds tears also, embracing the knees of Martin, and declaring to all the astonished bystanders, that this was the first word that he had ever heard his daughter speak,\* and lest this should appear incredible to any one, let Evagrius here give his testimony respecting it; for the act was done in his presence.

3. That seems to be a small affair which Harpagius the presbyter lately told me: yet it should not be omitted. The wife of count Avitianus sent Martin some oil, which according to custom he might bless, as a medicine for sundry diseases. The glass phial had a round belly, and a long neck which was not filled with oil, the intention being to leave room for the stopper. The presbyter testifies, that he saw the oil swelling under Martin's benediction, until it overflowed the mouth of the phial: and this

\* This was a double miracle: first, the tongue is loosed, so that the girl can articulate; and secondly, she can pronounce words at the first trial. Wonderful Martin!

blessing retained its virtue so as to make the oil continue to overflow while the boy was carrying it to his mistress, so that his clothes were all soaked with it; and when he got it home, the phial was so brimming full that there was no room for the stopper.

The act that I am about to mention, was done by an individual now present, but who does not permit his name to be used. Saturninas here was a witness of the fact. A dog was barking rather fiercely at us. "In the name of Martin," said he, "I command you to hold your tongue." The dog's bark stuck in his throat. His tongue was as dumb as if it had been cut off. So small a thing was it for Martin to work a miracle, that others could do them by the mere use of his name.\*

5. You all formerly knew the excessively barbarous and cruel ferocity of Count Avitian. With a rabid spirit he entered the city of Tours, followed by bands of miserable-looking wretches, chained together, whom he ordered to be destroyed by divers sorts of torture; and he had appointed the day for proceeding in the astonished city with this horrible work. When Martin heard of it, he went alone to the monster's tent, a little before midnight. But as all were asleep in the deep silence of the night, and the doors being barred, he was unable to get in, he threw himself down before the blood-stained door-sill. Meanwhile Avitian, buried in profound sleep, was disturbed by angel, who shook him and said, "Do you sleep while the servant of God is lying before your door?" Roused by the voice, he started out of bed, and calling his servants, he cried, all in a tremor, "Martin is before the door; go immediately and unbar the door, lest the servant of God should suffer injury." But they doing as it is the nature of

\* As good a miracle as this was wrought, not many years ago, by one of the illiterate pilgrim preachers that used to travel through the country. *He said* that in passing a house on the wayside, a fierce dog flew at him. He drew out his only weapon, a pocket Bible, presented it to the assailant, and said, "Bite that, if you dare." The dog instantly shut his mouth and slunk away.

all servants to do, scarcely crossed the door-sill, and laughing at their master's taking a dream for reality, came back and reported that nobody was at the door,—relying on their own conjecture, that no man, and especially that no priest, would lie watching before the door at such an hour of a horribly dark night. Avitian was easily persuaded of the same thing, and therefore went to sleep again. But he was soon startled by a more violent shake, and called out that Martin was certainly before the door, and that for this reason he could get no rest for either mind or body. The servants being slow, he went himself to the outer door, and there, as he had thought, he found Martin. The wretch with the evidence of such miraculous power, said, “Sir, why have you disturbed me so? You need not tell me what you want; for I know it already. Depart quickly, I beseech you; lest the wrath of heaven consume me, for the injury that you have suffered before my door. Hitherto I have inflicted punishments enough. Trust me, it is no light thing that will make me carry them further.” After the saint was gone, he summoned his officers, and commanded them to discharge all the prisoners. He soon afterwards left the city. When the citizens found that he had fled, they rejoiced greatly at their deliverance. Avitian himself related these facts to many; and Refrigerius, the presbyter, who is now before you, heard them from Evagrius, one of the military tribunes, a Christian man, who called upon the Divine Majesty to witness the truth of his declaration, that Avitian had told him these facts. Do not wonder that I should do to-day what I did not yesterday, that is, connect with every miracle the names of the witnesses, to whom any one who doubts may appeal, for they are yet alive. This course is necessary on account of the disbelief of a great many persons, who are said to doubt of some things related on yesterday. Therefore let them who want faith in us, apply to the witnesses who are alive and well, that they may have more faith in these statements. But if they be so incredulous, I confess that they disbelieve the witnesses also. I am astonished, however, that any one should have such a feeble

sense of religion, as to commit the sin of supposing that any one could lie about Martin. Far be the suspicion of such criminality from any one who lives under the government of God. Nor does Martin need that lies should be told about him. But to thee, O Christ! do we appeal for the truth of all that we say. We have said, and shall say nothing but what we have seen ourselves, or learned from good authors, and generally from their own mouths. Though we have taken the form of dialogue, that we might give a pleasing variety to the discourse, we profess to detail nothing but the sober truth of history. The unbelief of some has compelled me, to my sorrow, to throw in these remarks by the way. But now the discourse returns to our company of hearers, whose eager attention shows, I confess, that Ape should, in every instance, have denied admittance to unbelievers, judging that none ought to hear but those who believe.\*

6. Since you believe my statements, I am carried away by the spirit; I am frantic with grief to think that Christians should disbelieve the miraculous powers of Martin, when the demons confess them. His monastery was two miles from the city; yet whenever he set his foot out of his door to come to the church, the demoniacs throughout the assembly in the church began to bellow, and to tremble as if the judge were coming to condemn them all. Thus the groaning of the demons informed the clergy of the bishop's coming, when they had no other means of knowing. I saw one man, when Martin was approaching the church, snatched up into the air, and with outstretched arms suspended aloft, with his feet some distance above the ground. Whenever

\* We have before remarked, that these frequent allusions of Sulpicius to the disbelief of others in his miraculous stories, and his solemn asseverations of their truth, afford strong evidence of their falsehood. We shall only call the reader's attention, now, to the very different manner in which the evangelists relate our Saviour's miracles. Like honest men, conscious of the truth of their statements, they give them in a few simple words, without one word to enforce the truth upon unbelievers. There is honesty and candor on the face of their narratives, the contrary appears in these about St. Martin.

Martin took it in hand to exorcise demons, he did not touch the person with his hands, nor, as most of the clergy do, roll out a form of words; but, when the demoniacs were brought to him, he commanded the rest to retire, and the doors being closed, he wrapped himself in his hair cloth, and falling upon the ground in the midst of the church, he commenced praying. Then you might see the wretches driven out in divers ways. Some would be lifted up in the air, as if they were in the clouds, but keeping their garments in order so as not to expose their nakedness. Others you would see, without being questioned, confessing their crimes and what persons they had vexed. They would also confess their names without being required to do so. One would call himself Jupiter, another, Mercury. Finally, you might see all the servants of the devil, and the devil himself, tormented. Thus we find in Martin, a fulfillment of the promise, that the saints shall judge angels.

7. There was a village of the Senones, which had been every year laid waste by a hail storm. The inhabitants were compelled by their calamities to apply to Martin for relief. They sent as their ambassador one Auspicius, who had been a prefect, and whose fields had usually suffered more from the hail than any other. When he presented their petition, Martin so completely delivered the country from hail, that during the twenty remaining years of his life, no one in that region received any farther damage from hail. To show that this exemption was not accidental, but was due to Martin, we may mention that the very year of his death, the hail returned and ravaged the country. So much did the world itself feel his death, that as it had rejoiced while he was alive, so now it bewailed his departure. Now, if any weak auditor demands proof of this, I can summon, not one witness, but thousands; I can produce the whole country of the Senones to testify to the fact. However, you, Refrigerius, mentioned, I believe, that you had lately conversed on this subject with Romulus, a son of that Auspicius, and an honorable, pious, man, who told us of the affair, supposing that we had not heard



of it before ; and who was fearful that their future crops would be lost by continual storms, and grieved sorely that Martin was not spread to protect them

8. But to return to Avitian, who everywhere left monuments of his cruelty—Tours only excepted ; this monster nourished by human blood, showed himself meek and gentle in Martin's presence. I remember that Martin came to him one day, and on entering his office, saw a huge demon sitting behind his back. Before he came near he began to blow at the evil spirit.\* Avitian, supposing that he blew at him, said—"Why, saint, do you look at me so?" "I am not looking at you," says Martin, "but at the ugly fellow who is leaning on your shoulder." Then the devil withdrew and left his customary seat. It is well known that from this day, Avitian was milder in his conduct ; either because he then discovered that he had been doing the will of the devil who sat by him, or because the evil spirit having been driven by Martin from his seat, could proceed no further, when his minister Avitian became ashamed of his master, and the master would no longer urge the minister.

9. In the old castle of Ambatia, which is now frequently occupied by the brethren, there was, you know, an idol's temple that was constructed with much labor. The mass, composed of polished stone, rose in the form of a tower, and by its elegance sustained the superstition of the place. The blessed man had charged Marcellus, the presbyter, residing there, to destroy it. Returning sometime afterwards, he reproved the presbyter because this idolatrous structure yet stood. He excused himself by saying, that such a solid mass could scarcely be torn down by an army of men ; much less by a company of feeble clergymen and monks. Then Martin resorted to his well known resource ; he watched and prayed during the whole night. In the morning a tempest

\* Blowing or puffing out the breath, and spitting, were ceremonies used by the exorcists to drive away demons. Cursing and abusive language were also considered efficacious. Demons were fond of railing at others ; but when they got as good as they sent, they soon gave up.

arose and demolished the idolatrous structure to its foundation.

10. I have the authority of Refrigerius for a similar miracle, wrought upon a structure of the like sort. He was preparing to overthrow a pillar of immense size, that stood under an idol. But he was unable to effect his purpose. Then he betook himself to prayer. It is a certain fact that a pillar of like size was seen to fall from heaven upon the idol, with such force, that the idol and the pillar upon which it stood, were crushed to atoms; a small matter indeed for the invisible powers of heaven to effect; but here they were evidently seen by human eyes to be the servants of Martin.

11. Arborius, the ex-prefect, testifies that when Martin was offering sacrifice,\* he saw his hand clothed as it were with brilliant gems, and glittering with purple light, and that when the saint moved his right hand, he heard the sound of the gems striking against one another.

12. I lately heard a man testify, that when he was navigating the Etrurian Sea towards Rome, a violent squall of wind suddenly arose, and they were in extreme danger; when an Egyptian merchant on board, who was not even a Christian, cried with a loud voice, "God of Martin, save us." The tempest ceased immediately, and they held on their course through a calm sea.

13. Lycontius, one of the emperor's vicars, a faithful man, when a deadly plague afflicted his family, wrote to Martin imploring his help. The blessed man discovered that the case was a difficult one, because his spirit felt that this house was scourged by Divine power. He ceased not during seven days and nights to pray and fast, until his petition was granted. Presently Lycontius, having experienced the Divine benefit, flew to him with the tidings that his house was delivered from all danger. He offered one hundred pounds of silver, which Martin neither accepted nor refused, but set them apart for the redemption of captives. When some of the brethren suggested that a part of this

\* That is, administering the Lord's Supper, then called a sacrifice.

money should be reserved for the expenses of the monastery, because all were straitened for food, and some were in want of clothing, he said, "Let the Church both feed and clothe us; provided, however, that we appear to seek nothing for ourselves."\*

14. Here some great miracles occur to mind, which we can more easily admire than relate. You know my meaning when I say, that many of them cannot be told in plain terms. Such is this one, which I hardly know how to express. One of the brethren, (you know his name, but we shall not mention it here, lest we should make a good man blush,) but this brother when he found one cold day a good warm fire in Martin's stove, drew his seat near and spread out his legs before it so as to uncover his groin; Martin immediately felt that an injury had been done to the sanctity of his chamber, and called out, "Who is it that is defiling our room with a naked groin?" When the brother heard this, and was conscious that the rebuke was for him, he ran to us immediately, half dead, and confessed his shame in connection with Martin's miraculous power.

15. One day, also, whilst he was sitting on a stool in the small yard which you know surrounds his little house, he saw two demons standing on the high cliff that rises behind the monastery, and calling out with a joyful, animated voice, "Hah, you Brietis! hah, you Brietis!" I believe that they saw the wretch coming, and what madness the evil spirits had excited in him. In a short time Brietis came raving, and belched out a thousand reproaches against Martin. For he had been severely rebuked by Martin the day before, because previously to his ordination as a clergyman, (for he had been brought up in the monastery,) he had nothing of the kind; but now he kept horses and had a retinue of slaves. For he was at that time charged by many with buying

\* Why did not the lazy drones work for their food and clothing, instead of making the Church support them in their idle devotions, eighty or a hundred of them? They were eighty at first, and probably one hundred now; yet in these times of general distress, the working men of the Church had to feed and clothe them all!

not only barbarian boys, but pretty girls too. Maddened with these things, and, as I believe, instigated by demons, he assailed Martin so violently, that he scarcely kept his hands off from him. The saint, with placid countenance and tranquil mind, checked the unhappy man's frenzy by mild words. But the wicked spirit superabounded in him so, that even his own mind, with all its vanity, was overwhelmed ; with tremulous lips, and a countenance pale with rage, he rolled out words of sin, asserting that he was holier than Martin, seeing that he had been educated from his earliest years in the monastery among the sacred rites of the Church, whilst Martin, by his own confession, had in his youth been defiled by military actions, and now had grown old in the drivellings of vain, superstitious and ridiculous fancies about visions. When he had uttered many such things, and others more bitter, which it is proper to bury in silence, he at last went out, (his fury being satiated, as if he had now fully vindicated himself,) and ran back to the place whence he had come. Before long, however, through Martin's prayers, I believe, the demons being driven from his heart, he repented, came back, and prostrating himself at Martin's knees, he begged his pardon, confessed his error, and acknowledged that he had been actuated by a demon. It was no difficult matter for Martin to forgive a suppliant. Then the saint told him and all of us, how he had seen him driven by demons, and that his reproaches affected chiefly him that uttered them. When, afterwards, this same Bricitis was charged before him with various great crimes, Martin could not be provoked to expel him from the number of his priests, lest he should seem to avenge his own injury. He used to say, if Christ could suffer Judas, cannot I suffer Bricitis ?

Here Postumian said, I wish that neighbor of ours heard this example, who, though a wise man, yet if he be offended, he forgets everything else, present and future ; he is beside himself ; he goes mad ; he rages against the clergy ; he assails the laity ; he moves the whole earth for revenge ; he makes war for three whole years. Neither time nor reason can appease his wrath.

The man's unhappy condition calls for pity, even if this incurable fault were his only one. Gallus, you ought frequently to set before him examples of patience and forgiveness, that he may know how to be angry and how to pardon. But let us pass by a man whom it is not pleasant to speak of; and do you, Gallus, return to our Martin.

Then, said I, the sun has set; it is time for us to rise; such an attentive audience ought now to have their suppers.

16. But Martin is an inexhaustible theme of discourse. All his actions can never be told.\* But, Postumian, you will carry to the east what you have heard of him. Wherever you go, whatever regions, places, islands, and cities you visit, do you spread the name and glory of Martin among the people. First of all, remember to visit Campania, however much it may be out of your way, and there call on that illustrious man, Paullinus, whose praise fills the world, and unfold to him the history of our discourses on yesterday and to-day. Tell him everything, so that through him holy Rome may learn the praises of our man. He it was who first spread our little biography of Martin, not only through Italy, but through all Illyricum.. He envies not the glory of our Martin, and having a most pious esteem for the virtues of the saints, he will not refuse to compare our sainted chief to his own Felix.† If, then, you happen to cross over to Africa,

\* What end can there be to stories drawn from a teeming imagination, like these fictions about Martin's miracles?

† This Paullinus was Bishop of Nola, in Campania, that beautiful part of Italy which is now the northern part of the kingdom of Naples. He was of noble birth and great wealth, but having embraced a religious life and been made a priest, he sold his goods, and gave the proceeds to the poor, according to the custom of his age. His extant writings consist of letters and poems. Dupin says that he was very pious, of an humble and modest spirit; that he had much devotion for the saints, was inclined to believe miraculous stories and to reverence relics. In fact, like the leading saints of his day, he was full of superstitious credulity. He corresponded with our Sulpicius, who, on one occasion, wrote to him requesting some martyr's bones, that he might found a church; for in those days a church was thought to be of no account, unless it had some holy relics under the altar. Paullinus had no bones

tell what you have heard to Carthage ; for, although as you have said, they already know our Martin, yet let them know more of

to send him ; but he did send him what was even more precious, a chip of the true cross of Christ, inclosed in a golden box ! With this inestimable treasure, he gave him also an account of the manner in which the true cross was discovered by the mother of Constantine, the Empress Helena. She went to Jerusalem to search for it, three hundred years after the crucifixion and two hundred and sixty years after Jerusalem had been utterly destroyed by the Romans. Being told where to look for it, she caused the ground to be dug up, and lo ! the three crosses of Christ and of the two thieves were found, standing just as they had been planted on the day of the crucifixion ! Now the difficulty was to know which was Christ's cross—though as Christ was crucified between the thieves, one would suppose that his cross might have been distinguished by its situation. But a miracle must determine the point ; a man's dead body is brought and applied to two of the crosses without effect ; but no sooner did it touch the true cross, than the dead man started into life, and the question was decided. St. Paullinus added, that although people were continually taking chips from this true cross, yet it continued always whole and entire. This solves a difficulty which we used to feel concerning the wood of the true cross—namely, that there was enough of it among the Roman Catholics, all warranted by the priests to be genuine, to load a ship ! We could not understand how this might be, until we saw the statement of the holy Father Paullinus. The same holy father tells us, that the Empress Helena built churches over the sacred places in Jerusalem, and that in one of them the prints of Christ's feet, when he ascended to heaven, were visible in the sand ! We had thought from St. Luke's account (Acts, 1.) that Jesus had ascended from Mount Olivet. But then, might not the sand on which he had imprinted his footsteps, have been carried in baskets or bags to Jerusalem, and the prints miraculously preserved ? Who knows ?

St. Paullinus was also, as Dupin says, a devout believer in the protecting power of dead saints and the propriety of worshipping them. But then he had not so good an opinion of some of the living saints, especially of Pope Siricius and his clergy in Rome. They had treated him badly, while he lived among them ; and he said in one of his letters, that they were envious and uncharitable towards every man of any reputation for holiness and piety. But proud, envious and ambitious, as the popes were in those early days, before they had reached the height of their power, they were perfect saints compared with the majority of their successors in later times, when the pretended chair of St. Peter was often filled with as abominable monsters as ever disgraced the world.

him, that they may not confine their admiration to their own martyr Cyprian. If you should turn to the left, into the Gulf of Achaia, let Corinth know, and let Athens know, that Plato was not wiser in the academy, nor Socrates more intrepid in prison, than our Martin. Happy, indeed, was Greece, that was favored with the preaching of St. Paul ; but Gaul was not neglected by Christ, who granted her the privilege of having a Martin. Then, when you come to Egypt, though she be proud of the number and virtues of her saints, yet let her not disdain to hear ; because to her and to all Asia, Europe, with her Martin alone, will not yield the palm.

17. But when you go thence to Jerusalem, I enjoin upon you the office of a mourner in my stead, that is, if you ever approach the coast of that illustrious city of Ptolemais, inquire diligently where my once dear friend Pomponius lies buried, and disdain not to visit his bones in a strange land. There pour forth tears from your own heart, as if they flowed from mine ; and though the office be a fruitless one, strew the ground with purple flowers and odoriferous grass. Yet you will say to him, not harshly nor bitterly, in the language of pity, not of reproach, that if he had been willing formerly to listen to you, or always to regard my advice, and had he imitated Martin rather than that other man, whom I will not name, he would never have so cruelly disappeared from my sight, nor have been covered with the dust of a foreign land, nor have suffered the pirate's fate of dying by shipwreck, and scarcely reaching a grave by the sea shore. Thus with my own tears gushing forth, and the company filled with sympathetic sorrow, with a glowing admiration of Martin, and no less heartfelt lamentations, we closed the scene and parted.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### BRIEF NOTICES OF DISTINGUISHED MONKS FROM SOCRATES AND SOZOMEN.

#### *Ecclesiastical Historians of the Fifth Century.*

THE earliest historian of the church was Eusebius, bishop of Cesarea, in the reign of Constantine the Great. His history is exceedingly valuable, though professedly partial ; for he declared his intention to relate only those matters which were honorable to the Church. His history closes with the year 324 ; but he added a flattering life of Constantine, in which he gives an account of those ecclesiastical affairs in which the emperor was concerned. Constantine died in the year 337.

Socrates, Sozomen, Evagrius and Theodoret all wrote continuations of the history of the church to a later period. At present we are concerned only with the two former of these historians.

Socrates brought down his history to the year 450, Sozomen only to the year 439. They were both advocates or lawyers in Constantinople, of which Socrates was a native ; but Sozomen was born in Palestine, and bred among the monks there ; hence he was an enthusiastic admirer of monks and monachism. Neither of them is distinguished for skill or accuracy, yet their histories are valuable documents of the time.

Both give accounts of the primitive hermits or *Fathers of the Desert* and their successors ; but Sozomen is much more full on this subject, his admiration of monks and monachism being much more extravagant than that of Socrates.



We shall give the reader some of the more curious and interesting of their accounts of these primitive monks, in order to complete the picture which we purposed to exhibit from the earliest records, of these wonderful men of the fourth century, *the Fathers of the Desert*.

*Of Ammon and his Bride.*

In the time of St. Antony, an Egyptian named Ammon also embraced the monastic philosophy. When a young man, he was averse to marriage; but his relations insisting that he should take a wife, he complied and celebrated his nuptials. When he had with the usual ceremonies conducted his bride to the bedchamber, and they were now alone together, he drew forth a copy of the apostolical epistles, opened it and began to read to her that part of the epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vii.) in which St. Paul gives commands to married persons, and expounded it to her.\* He quoted other writings also, and expatiated on the burthens and troubles of married life, the sharp pains of child-bearing and the plague of rearing children. Then, on the other hand, he recounted the advantages of chastity, its freedom from care, its purity, and how virginity places us next to God. Having spoken these and many other things to his virgin wife, he persuaded her to join him in renouncing the world and living in a virgin state. But she thought it hard to separate from him: therefore they lived eighteen years together, occupying separate couches, and practising the monastic exercises of abstinence, prayer and watchung. The woman having so long imitated her husband's ascetism, she thought it unjust to confine so great a man at home. She proposed, therefore, that they should separate. He thanked God for this proposal of his wife, and said, Do you keep this house, and I will provide another abode for myself. So he went to the south side of Lake Marcotis into a desert place about

\* This singular bridegroom expounded that chapter erroneously; for St. Paul commands the contrary of what Ammon taught his bride.

Scetis and the mountain of Nitria. There he philosophized\* during two and twenty years. Twice a year he visited his wife. He became the founder and head of many monasteries about this desert mountain, and many and distinguished disciples put themselves under this divine leader. Many too were the miracles performed by him, and diligently recorded by the monks of Egypt; for they take pains to commemorate accurately the virtues and mighty works of the ancient monks, as they have been handed down to them from age to age.

Among many others we shall relate only the following: They say that Ammon never saw himself naked, and that he considered it a great shame for a monk to expose his naked body even to his own eyes. He and his disciples had, on some occasion, to cross a broad and deep canal called Lycus. That they might not see one another naked, Ammon commanded Theodore to go some distance apart from him. Still, however, being ashamed to strip himself, Ammon prayed God to put him over, and straightway an angel carried him to the opposite bank. When Theodore had crossed, and saw Ammon on the same side with feet and clothes perfectly dry, he asked the old man to tell him how he had gotten over. Ammon refused to inform him, until Theodore had fallen at his feet, and declared that he would never rise from that spot until he learned how it was. Then the old man, after exacting a promise from his disciple, that he would keep it a secret during his lifetime, confessed the fact.

I will add another miracle, not less remarkable. Certain dishonest parents had a son bitten by a mad dog, and the boy was apparently at the point of death. They brought him to Ammon and with loud cries implored him to heal their son. "It is not I who must heal him (said he), but yourselves. Do you restore to the owner the ox that you stole, and the boy will get well im-

\* That is, lived an ascetic life, like some of the heathen philosophers. Palladius in his *Historia Lausiaca* (c. 12) says that he had the Old and New Testaments by heart. We may doubt the literal truth of this statement.

mediately.” And so it came to pass; as soon as the ox was restored, the boy recovered.

When Ammon died, Antony is reported to have seen his spirit ascending to heaven, conducted by angels singing psalms. Yet Antony lived many days’ journey from Nitria.\*

*Blind Didymus.*

[Didymus was not a monk; but as his history is mixed up with that of the monks and is both short and remarkable, we give it from Sozomen.]

Early in the fourth century, flourished Didymus, an ecclesiastical writer, and president of the theological school in Alexandria. He was accomplished in every branch of science. He was well versed in the poets and orators, in astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic, and in the doctrines of the philosophers. He had learned all these things by the exercise of his intellect through the sense of hearing only: For when he was yet a boy learning his letters, he became blind. Before he was fully grown, he had an ardent desire for learning. He attended the lectures of learned men, and gathered what he could by hearing only. Yet such was his proficiency, that he comprehended the most difficult theorems of mathematical science. He is said to have learned the forms of the letters by having them engraved on a board, and feeling them with his fingers. Then he learned to form syllables, words, and sentences out of them by the constant exercise of his hearing, understanding, and memory. He was an extraordinary prodigy. His fame drew many to Alexandria: some came to hear his lectures: others came merely to see him. He greatly injured the cause of the Arians by his recommendation of the Nicene creed.\*

He had a great facility in persuading men,—not by the use of violent language, but by argumentative appeals to every man’s

\* Nitria was about 70 miles south of Alexandria. The Upper Thebaid, where Antony lived, was 400 or 500 miles farther.

† The Trinitarian Creed adopted by the Council of Nice.

judgment. The Catholics had a great affection for him, and so had the monks of Egypt, particularly the great Antony, who, it is said, when he came to Alexandria to sustain Athanasius, thus addressed him: "O, Didymus, do not think it a grievance that you are deprived of the sort of eyes with which lizards, mice, and all the meanest animals are endowed; but rather esteem it a blessing that you have the eyes of an angel, by which you can clearly apprehend God and accurately discern the truth. Socrates gives this saying of Antony a little differently; but the variation is not material.

### *The Two Macarii.*

[NOTE.—We have inserted some particulars from Helyot, and inclosed them in brackets.]

There were two monks named Macarius, both [disciples of St. Antony, and] heads of monasteries about Scetis, not far from the mountain of Nitria in Egypt. The younger was born in Alexandria, the elder in the interior of Egypt. Both were endowed with a divine foreknowledge and philosophy—were the terror of demons, and performed almost incredible miracles and cures. The Egyptian was said to have recalled a dead man to life, that he might convince a certain heretic that there is a resurrection of the dead. This one lived to the age of 90 years, 60 of which he spent in solitude. At the very outset of his monastic life, he so distinguished himself, that, although a youth, he was by the monks called the old man. When he was 40 years of age he was ordained priest.\* The Alexandrian was also made a priest some time afterwards. [He was author of a rule for monasteries. He resigned a lucrative office, and embraced the monastic life.] He carried his ascetic discipline further than almost all others. Some of his practices he invented; some he borrowed from others.

\* At first, monachism had no connection with the clerical office. When communities of monks were formed, priests began to be ordained for them. Finally, the monkish orders became the *regular clergy*, while the other clergy were called *seculars*.

[He became a miracle of chastity and abstinence. To quell the risings of lust, he set himself naked in a marsh infested with flies, and there he staid six months long, so that his appearance was wholly changed. He went once in the garb of a laborer to Tabenna in Upper Egypt, and was received into the brotherhood without being recognized. But St. Pachomius discovered him by revelation, and was astonished at his extraordinary penances. For, during fast days he stood upright, ate only on Sundays, or rather did on that day as if he ate a few pulse. He then went from place to place, to Nitria and then to Scetis.] He pursued all his ascetic practices with such zeal, that no beard grew out of his starved and shrivelled skin. [He died about the year 400, and is said to have left behind him about 5000 disciples.]

*St. Pachomius, founder of regular monasteries.*

NOTE.—The monks first gathered by Antony in Upper Egypt, by Ammon in Lower Egypt, and by Hilarion in Palestine, &c., were subject to no established rule or government; but each monk in his separate cell pursued his own plan of exercise, and attended the social meetings once or twice a-week. Pachomius established the first regular Cenobite monastery at Tabenna, in Upper Egypt. As neither Socrates nor Sozomen gives an account of his early life, we take from Fleury the current legend on the subject.]

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Pachomius was born in Thebaid, of pagan parents; but from his earliest infancy he was disgusted with idolatry. Having tasted of some wine that had been offered to idols, he became sick at the stomach, and threw it all up again. Another time, his parents took him with them to sacrifice to an idol on the border of the Nile. The priest who officiated in the temple found that something went wrong with his sacrifices. He could not imagine what was the matter, until the demon gave him to un-

derstand that the child Pachomius hindered him from delivering the usual oracles.

His parents had him taught to read Egyptian, his native language. From his earliest youth he cultivated chastity and exercised abstinence. At twenty years of age he was enrolled in the army of Constantine the Great against Maxentius, and on his voyage down the Nile, he heard for the first time of Jesus Christ and of Christians, and being struck with what he heard, he prayed God to enlighten him; and vowed that if he learned the true way, he would devote himself to God's service.

After the war he returned to Thebaid, where he received Christian instruction and baptism. Then having heard of an old man named Palemon, who was serving God in the depths of the desert, he went in search of him; and having found his cell, he knocked at the door. The old man opened it a little and called out, What do you want? Pachomius answered, God has sent me to learn of you how I may be a monk. Palemon replied, You cannot be a monk here: the monastic life is no easy matter: many have come here disgusted with the world, and have not persevered. So, as I have told you already, you cannot be received into this monastery. Go to another and practice penance for a time, and then I can receive you. But consider, my son, that I eat nothing but bread and salt. I use no oil; I drink no wine; during half the night I watch and sing psalms, or meditate on the Scriptures. Sometimes I pass whole nights without sleep.

These words made Pachomius tremble; yet he engaged with so much faith to practice all, that Palemon opened the door and gave him the monastic habit.\* This took place in the year 313. [St. Antony was then about 62 years old.]

\* The mention of a monastic habit here has been used as an argument for the antiquity of Christian monachism. There was already an established costume of monkery. And moreover Palemon is called an old man at this time. He was perhaps as old as Antony; and we must observe that this legend was composed long after the time, and that it is a *monkish legend*.

He now lived with St. Palemon, spinning hair and making sackcloth, to provide something for the poor.\* On one of the Easter holidays, Palemon told Pachomius to prepare some food suitable for the day. Pachomius mixed a little oil with the salt which he was accustomed to use with the wild herbs—this being a feast day. Palemon, when he saw this, smote his forehead, and with tears cried out: My Lord was *crucified* and shall I *eat oil* ! He could never bring himself to do this. Sometimes he would eat without drinking ; at other times he would drink without eating. When he was exhorted to take some comforting nourishment on account of his infirmities, he said, No ! the martyrs had suffered quite as much for Jesus Christ.—*Fleury, Hist. Eccles.*, Vol. III., p. 18.

*From Sozomen.*—Pachomius was founder of the monasteries in the canton of Tabenna, whence these monks were called Tabennians. Their habit and mode of life were somewhat different from those of other monks ; yet they were adapted to excite the mind to virtue, contempt of earthly things and contemplation of things above ; so that when they left the body, they could readily pass into the heavens. They clothed themselves in skins, according to the example of Elijah the Tishbite ; for the reason, I presume, that a garment of skins would remind them of the virtues of the prophet. They manfully resist their venereal desires ; and in emulation of that prophet and in the hope of similar rewards, they exercise ready temperance. They wear coats without sleeves, to teach their hands that they must refrain from injury. They wear on the head that sort of covering called a cowl, to signify that they live simply and purely, like sucking children, whose heads are usually protected with that sort of cap. They also wear a

\* Shroeckh says (*Christ. Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. III., p. 170) that he learned with Palemon to nourish himself with bread and salt, mingled sometimes with dust and ashes. Also, when sleep overcame them at night, they kept themselves awake by carrying sand from place to place. They prayed almost incessantly.

girdle and a sash,—the former about the loins, the latter thrown first over the shoulders and on both sides of the neck, and then passed round the body under the armpits, thus leaving the arms free for the service of God and for labor ; and it admonishes them that they should always be ready for these things. I am aware, however, that others give different reasons for these several parts of their costume. But enough of these things.

They say that Pachomius first philosophized alone in a cave ; but an angel appeared to him [a first and a second time] and commanded him to collect the young monks and live with them ; for that he had well managed his own exercises, and ought now to profit many by taking charge of congregations of monks ; and that he should govern them by rules which would be given to him. The angel afterwards gave him a board or plate of metal, which is yet kept by the monks, and on which were inscribed the following rules : namely—

That he should permit every one to eat, drink, work, fast, &c., as he was able to bear it ;—that those who ate most should work most, but that the abstinent should have an easier task of labor :

They should build many cells, each of which should be occupied by three monks ;—that those in the same cell should take their food together in silence, sitting at table with a veil over their faces, so as not to see one another, nor anything else but the table and provisions before them ; that no stranger should eat with them, except when they gave hospitality to some wayfaring man :

That he who wished to join their society should first for three years undergo the hardest of their labors and exercises ; then he might become a member of their association.

[In the rule of St. Pachomius found in the works of Jerome, they were forbidden to anoint themselves, according to the custom of the country, or to bathe their naked bodies except as a remedy in cases of sickness.]

They were also to clothe themselves with skins, and to cover their heads with woollen cowls [reaching to their shoulders] and



marked with little purple crosses. They were to wear inner coats of linen, sleeveless, and girded about their middle. They were to sleep with these and their outer coats of skin girded about them, and each sitting in a chair built up at the sides so as to contain his bed.

On the first and last days of the week, when they approached the altar for communing in the holy mysteries, they were to loose their girdles and lay aside their skin garments.

They were to pray twelve times in the day, and as many times at night; and at the ninth hour three times.\* When they were about to eat [at the ninth hour] they should sing a psalm before every prayer.

The whole congregation should be divided into 24 classes, each to be designated by a letter of the Greek alphabet, denoting their character and manner of life. The simpler sort were called Iota (ι), the crafty were marked by the crooked Zeta (ζ) or Xi (ξ), and so of the rest, the figure of the letter denoting the sort of persons in the class.

These were the rules which Pachomius imposed upon his disciples. He was a man of great humanity, and so dear to God, that he foresaw future events, and often conversed with angels.

[Helyot relates from the old legends, that during his solitary life he wore a hair shirt, and slept standing, without even leaning against a wall. His brother John lived with him in his cell for some years; and when the death of his brother left him alone again, he was plagued with many temptations and visionary tricks of the Devil.]

By living according to his rules, the monks of Tabenna became renowned, and their number grew in time to seven thousand. The community in Tabenna, with whom Pachomius lived, numbered about thirteen hundred; the rest occupied divers

\* Whether these prayers at the ninth hour were additional to the twelve, is uncertain; probably they prayed once hourly and at the ninth hour three times.

places in Thebaid and Lower Egypt. They all live by the same rules and have all things in common. They consider the congregation in Tabenna as the mother of them all, and the rulers of that congregation are the fathers and rulers of them all.

[He founded also a nunnery (says Helyot) at the suggestion of his sister, who had come to speak with him. But she could not have this comfort, as *he never spoke with a woman*. However, he counselled her through the doorkeepers to devote herself wholly to God. She did so; and he had her a cell built not far from the monastery of Tabenna. There she soon saw herself the spiritual mother of many daughters who followed her example. Palladius says their number was four hundred and twenty. Except the priest and deacon, no men were permitted to visit them, and they only on Sundays. The monks who had relations amongst the nuns, were permitted to visit them in company of the oldest and discreetest of the nuns. They first spoke to the lady superior, and then to their relations in her presence and that of the chief nuns. They were not permitted to make or receive presents, nor to eat in the nunnery. The monks went thither to build their monasteries, and to perform other services for them; but they never ate nor drank with them.]

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NOTE.—In the works of St. Jerome, we have a translation from Egyptian into Latin of the rules of St. Pachomius, and of some epistles purporting to be from his pen. The rules are so numerous and so minute in their directions, that we presume them to be an expansion and enlargement of the primitive rules given by the angel to St. Pachomius, engraven on a board.

From these rules we learn, that the monks of Tabenna were governed by abbots and subordinate officers, who governed and directed everything, and who reprov'd offenders for the smallest departure from the rules.

On reading these rules, one is struck with the great number of

precautions that were found necessary to prevent any of the holy brethren from getting more than their allotted share of the provisions, or from coming late to prayers, lectures and psalm singings, going out before they were over, or from sleeping, talking, or laughing while they were going on. They remind one of the rules found necessary in schools and colleges to prevent naughty boys from misbehaving. Such rules would not have been enacted, if experience had not proved the necessity of them. They suggest much that monkish historians have omitted, concerning the character and behavior of the monks.

Yet upon the whole, the system of Pachomius was more rational, less childish and contrary to nature, than most of those afterwards invented by founders of new orders of monks.

### *Apollonius and Anuph.*

About the same time Apollonius was distinguished for his monastic exercises. He began, it is said, at about fifteen years of age to philosophize in the deserts. At forty years of age, he returned by Divine command to the inhabited places. He also had his monastery in Thebaid. He became a great favorite of God and a worker of the most stupendous miracles. He was a strict performer of his duties ; a good and agreeable teacher of those who were willing to learn the Divine philosophy. Finally, *his prayers were so acceptable to God, that whatsoever he asked for was done* ; for being a very wise man, his petitions were wisely ordered, and were such as God would readily grant.

It was at the same period that I suppose the Divine Anuph to have lived. I have heard that in the times of persecution, when he first professed the faith of Christ, he neither told a falsehood nor coveted any earthly things. *He also obtained whatsoever he asked of God*, and was instructed by an angel in every kind of virtue.

NOTE.—What strikes us in the brief notice of these Egyptian monks, is the wonderful efficacy attributed to their prayers, and the agreement in this particular between them and the Hindoo Sannyasis, or saints of the first order, who after spending twenty years in monkish ascetism, not only became miracle workers of the ordinary sort, but could obtain of the gods, by prayer, whatsoever they desired. See Chap. II., on Monachism among the Hindoos, § 2.

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In the latter half of the fourth century, many famous monks flourished in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. We shall give from Sozomen a brief account of such as were most remarkable, and whose histories most strikingly display both the spirit of monachism, and the disposition of its professors and admirers to tell wonderful things of its self-tormenting heroes.

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*John, the Monk.*—God endowed him with a knowledge of future and secret things, not inferior to that possessed by the ancient prophets, and gave him the power of healing incurable diseases.

*Or.*—This monk lived from early youth in the deserts, perpetually singing hymns to God. He fed on wild plants and roots. He drank water when he happened to find it. When he was growing old he went by Divine command to Thebaid, and there presided over many monasteries, and wrought miracles. He drove away diseases and demons by prayer only. He never learned to read; but he had no need of books to aid his memory, for what he once heard, nothing could ever make him forgot.

*Theonas* was acquainted with Egyptian, Greek and Roman literature. He is said to have kept an unbroken silence of thirty years.

*Helles* having been taught the monastic discipline from his boyhood, did many wonderful things. He could carry fire in his bosom without burning his clothes; by which feat he mightily stirred up the monks who lived with him. They were induced to

believe that the working of miracles would follow a zealous attention to monkish exercises.

*Elias*, near the city of Antinoos, philosophized till he was one hundred years old. He had, previously to his coming near that city, spent seventy years in the desert. In his extreme old age, he would not bate a jot from the severity of his exercises, but rigorously persevered in them to the end.

*Apelles* flourished about the same time in the monasteries of Egypt, near the town of Achoris. He performed a great number of miracles. For example, being a blacksmith, he was one night working at his trade, when a demon appeared to him *in the form of a beautiful woman*, and began to tempt his chastity. Instead of yielding, he drew from the fire the red-hot iron on which he was working, clapped it to the demon's face, and made him run away, yelling and howling with pain.\*

*Serapion* governed about one thousand monks in the district of Arsinoe. He trained them all to supply their own wants, and to have something to give to the poor. In harvest-time they hired themselves out as reapers. Thus they laid up a store of comforts for themselves and a surplus for other monks. [NOTE—These were the bravest monks that we have read of; but they ought not to have given so much as a grain of barley to their lazy brethren.]

*Eulogius* was ordained priest. They say that when he officiated in sacred things, he so perfectly discerned the thoughts of those who approached him, that he would charge them with their secret crimes, and reveal their most hidden thoughts. Those, therefore, who had done any wickedness, or even meditated the doing of it, he drove from the altar (or communion table), denouncing their faults, but afterwards, when they were purified by penitence, he would admit them to the mysteries.

\* We are at a loss to conceive how a spiritual being could be made to howl with pain by the application of a hot iron, especially a fallen angel, accustomed to suffer worse things. A hot iron can inflict pain only on a creature of flesh.

*Apollos* lived in Thebaid. He was yet a boy when he began to philosophize. When he had lived forty years alone in the desert, he was ordered by a divine revelation to take up his abode near the habitations of men. Here he wrought such a multitude of miracles, that he soon became renowned, and ruler of a great number of monks; for his useful instructions were qualified to draw men to monachism. Timothy, bishop of Alexandria, who has written the lives of many monks, has given an account of his manner of life, and of the many miracles which he wrought. We have taken the foregoing sketches from him.

There lived at the same time in the deserts, near Alexandria, about two thousand monks, among whom was

*Dorotheus*.—His manner of life was this—by day he would collect stones from the neighboring sea-shore, and build a cell every year for those monks who were not able to build for themselves. By night he would twist cords out of palm-leaves, and make baskets to sell for provisions. His daily food was six ounces of bread with a very small quantity of herbs. His drink was water. He never relaxed from his abstemious diet. He never lay on a bed or couch of any sort, nor did he ever stretch out his feet for the sake of ease, nor voluntarily go to sleep; but whilst he was working or eating nature would overcome him, so that his eyes would close for awhile, and often when he was nodding the food would drop out of his mouth. It sometimes happened that he was so oppressed with sleep as to tumble down upon the twigs and leaves in his cell. Then he would be sorely grieved, and say in a low voice, You could as easily persuade an angel to sleep as a good monk. He addressed these words either to sleep, or to *the demon who hindered his good purpose of living without sleep*.\*

Whilst he thus afflicted himself with labors, some one said to him, Why do you kill your body at such a rate? He answered, *Because my body kills me*.

\* The monks and their admiring historians among the Fathers, absurdly attributed to the malice of demons the natural effects of their own unnatural conduct.

*Benjamin*, an old man about Scetis, was a distinguished ascetic. By the grace of God he could cure the sick of any disease, without medicines, by the mere touch of his hand, or with oil which he had blessed by prayer. Yet this same great man fell into a dropsy, and his body swelled to such a degree, that he could not be carried out through the door of his cell till the posts were taken away. As he could not lie down on account of his disease, he sat for eight months in a broad chair, healing the sick as usual, and taking it patiently that he could not heal himself. But he rather comforted those who visited him, and asked them to pray for his soul. *He cared nothing*, he said, *for his body—For*, said he, *when it was well, it did me no good ; and now, when it is sick, it can do me no harm.*

*Moses* began life as a slave, but on account of his unfaithfulness he was driven from his master's house. He then took to robbery and became a captain of brigands. After he had in this capacity committed many robberies, he somehow changed his course, and became a monk. He soon reached the summit of ascetic philosophy.

Because, on account of the full habit of his body, contracted in his former course of life, he was full of libidinous thoughts, he macerated his body by ten thousand ascetic mortifications. One while lived upon dry bread, and a small quantity even of that ; then, too, he worked very hard, and prayed fifty times a day. Then for six whole years he prayed all the night, standing on his feet, never bending a knee nor taking a wink of sleep. Sometimes at night he would go round the cells of the monks and secretly fill their water pitchers. This was a laborious task ; for the cells of the monks were at various distances, but between ten and thirty furlongs from the place where he got the water. Yet he long retained his strength in spite of all the abstinence, labor, and vexation which he inflicted upon his body. For after all, when four robbers broke into his cell, one night, he is said to have caught and tied together the whole four, and then to have lifted them upon his shoulders and carried them to the church, that the

other monks might determine what should be done with them, as he considered it unlawful for him to hurt anybody. Never was there such a change seen from vice to virtue ; and as he reached the highest point of monastic philosophy, and frightened the demons most terribly, he was made a priest of the monks of Scetis. He died at the age of seventy-five years, leaving many excellent disciples behind him.

*Paul* lived in Ferme, a mountain by Scetis, and had five hundred monks under him. He never worked, nor accepted of anything from others except his necessary food. His whole business was prayer : he paid as a daily tribute to God, three hundred prayers ; and that he might not mistake in counting them, he put three hundred pebbles into his bosom, before he began ; and at the close of every prayer, he threw out a pebble. When they were all gone, he was sure that he had completed the number of his prayers.\*

*Stephen* dwelt near Marmarice, by the Lake Mareotis. He excrcised himself in the strictest system of monastic discipline and thus became a very celebrated monk. He was meek, wise exceedingly, pleasant, useful in society, and qualified to comfort the souls of the afflicted, and to change their sorrow into joy. He himself showed a cheerful patience in his calamities ; for he had a grievous and incurable ulcer, which made it necessary to amputate one of his legs. He coolly presented it to the surgeons, and while they were cutting it off, he went on with his work, plaiting palm-leaves for baskets. He exhorted those who stood by, not to mind his sufferings, nor to think that anything which God does can have any other than a good end. He doubted not that it would be good for him to have suffered so much : perhaps it was for his sins, for which it would be better for him to be punished in this life, than in the life to come. Stephen was intimate with St. Antony.

\* The rosary, or bead-roll, was not yet borrowed of the heathen priests, to save trouble in counting the "vain repetitions" of prayers, censured by our Saviour. Mat. vi. 7.



*Pior* resolved in early youth to engage in the monastic life. When for this purpose he quitted his father's house, *he promised God that he would never afterwards see any of his family*. Fifty years afterwards, his sister heard that he was alive. The unexpected news filled her with exceeding joy, and she could not rest until she should see her brother. The bishop of that region, when he saw her lamenting and supplicating on this account in her old age, wrote to the governors of the monks in the desert of Scetis, to send *Pior* to visit his sister. Being ordered to go, he could not refuse : for the Egyptian monks—and all others, I believe—cannot lawfully disobey a command of their superiors.\* Therefore he took with him a companion and departed for his own country. When he came to the door of his old family mansion, he stopped and sent in word of his arrival. When he heard the sound of the door opening, *he shut his eyes*, called his sister by name, and said, I am *Pior*, your brother : look at me now as much as you please. She was delighted and gave thanks to God. But he, after making a prayer before the door, returned to his place of abode.†

He had dug a well here and found only bitter water ; but he continued to use it during the remainder of his life. His excessive self-denial in this matter was manifested after his death ; for, though many attempted to philosophize at the same place, none of them could bear the water. I am persuaded, however, that he could easily have changed the bitter into sweet water, if he had not chosen to philosophize in this way, seeing that he once made a fountain spout forth where none had existed before : for the monks who were with the monk *Moses*, relate that they were digging a well once ; and having failed to get water at the utmost depth that they could dig, they were giving up in despair, when

\* See for confirmation of this, the 1st Dialogue of Sulpicius Severus, §5, §11, §12. An absolute, slavish subjection to their superiors, was, and is, a fundamental rule of Cenobite monachism.

† This suppression of all human affections is another of the monkish virtues, as it was also of the Hindoo devotees.

Pior came upon them and reproved them for their despondency. He then descended into the well; and after he had uttered a prayer, he struck the spade thrice into the ground: whereupon a fountain is said to have gushed up and filled the well. When asked by Moses's monks to stay and dine with them, he said, no, that was not what he had come for: he had finished the business which had brought him thither.

Pior usually walked when he took his food. When asked why he ate in that way, he said, because I am not willing to eat as if I made a business of eating; but I choose to do it as a thing by the way. To another who asked him the same question, he answered, I do it that the mind may not take any pleasure in such a corporeal act as eating.—(NOTE.—*This last paragraph is from Socrates.*)

*Isodore* said that during 40 years he had never been conscious of a sin even in thought, and that he had never in his life consented to an evil desire or to anger.—*Socrates.*

### *Of the Monasteries of Nitria and Cellia.*

[NOTE. We shall give a few interesting particulars from *Sozomen*, of the state of these monasteries in the latter half of the fourth century.]

Nitria is so called from a neighboring village in which they collect nitre. [It and Scetis are a little south of Lake Mareotis, and sixty or seventy miles south of Alexandria.] A large number of monks philosophized there. About fifty monasteries were situated in its neighborhood and near each other; in some of which the monks lived in society, in others separately. About seventy furlongs farther in the desert, is a place called Cellia, from the great number of monastic cells that are scattered over the place. These cells were situated at such a distance apart, that the inmates could not see nor hear each other. But these monks all assembled in congregation on the first and last days of the week. If then any one should fail to appear, they know that he is sick; then they go, one or two at a time, to attend upon

him. Except when some case of this sort occurs, they never converse with one another. Nevertheless, those who desire instruction, go to those who are properly qualified, and hear from them discourses profitable to the soul. Those who have attained the summit of ascetic wisdom, and are able to guide themselves, retire for the sake of quiet to a considerable distance from the rest.

*Of the Monks of Syria.*

We come next, (says Sozomen,) to the Syrian and Persian monks, who emulated those of Egypt and grew up to an immense multitude.

Among those of Nisibis, [a city near the Persian frontier of Syria,] who lived about the mountain called Sigoron, the most famous at this period were Balthaeus, Eusebius, Bargas, &c. Those who first introduced this sort of philosophizing into Syria, were commonly called *Boskoi* or *Grass-eaters*; because they had no houses, ate no bread or cooked vegetables, and drank no wine, but lived in the mountains, always praising God, praying and singing hymns, according to the rule of the Church. *When the time for eating came, each one took his knife, and all wandering about the mountain, like cattle feeding, they gathered herbs and ate them raw*; and so they philosophized.

At the same time about Edissa and the neighboring cities, there were some famous monks, such as Julian, and Ephrem Syrus, the writer; Baries also and Eulogius, both of whom were made bishops, not of any particular city, but in order to invest them with an honor and dignity becoming their merits, they were ordained in their monasteries. In the same way Lazarus was made a bishop.\*

All those who lived about the borders between Syria and Per-

\* All sorts of corruptions and abuses were now growing up in the Church; among the rest this abuse of clerical ordination. Here are monks ordained bishops, that is, overseers, with nothing to oversee, but as an honorary reward for monkish austerities!

sia had the same discipline. Their object was to train the soul for a ready departure from this world and for leaving all earthly good, by praying, fasting and singing hymns. In these exercises they employed most of their time. They despised money, worldly business, and bodily comforts and embellishments. Some went to the extreme of abstinence, as Batthaeus, *who used his teeth so little that they bred worms*. Alas, another monk, lived to the age of seventy without having ever tasted bread. Heliodorus spent many nights together without sleep, and fasted a week at a time.

In Coele Syria also, although with the exception of Antioch the Christian religion flourished later there than in the neighboring countries, there were some brave monks. One Paul, a native of Telmisus, founded a noble congregation of monks at a place called Jugatum. He died there at a very advanced age, and nearly all the other monks lived a long time. God gave them long life, it seems to me, for the promotion of religion; for these drew nearly all the Syrians and many of the Persians and Saracens of the desert, to their own religion from idolatry.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

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### *Theodoret.*

THIS Father was born at Antioch in the year 386. His birth, according to his own account, was miraculous, his mother having conceived him in answer to the prayers of the monk Peter, of whom the reader will find some account in following narratives, taken from Theodoret. She had before been healed of an incurable disease by another monk. The father, mother, and son, were all healed of their distempers after his birth, by touching the girdle of the same holy monk Peter, whose prayers had caused his conception and safe deliverance into the world. He received a learned education, partly under the tuition of the famous John Chrysostom, who was a teacher of youth before he was made bishop of Constantinople.

Theodoret, after he was admitted to holy orders, was against his will made bishop of Cyrus, about the year 420. Cyrus, or as it is more properly written, Cyrrhus, was a city of no great importance in the interior of Syria, east of Antioch. He was a faithful and successful bishop. At the frequent hazard of his life, he extirpated heresy and heathenism from his diocese—pretty much in the same way, we suspect, as St. Martin drove paganism out of him—that is, by crusading against the unbelievers and misbelievers, pulling down temples and dispersing assemblies of err-

ing worshippers. In these holy enterprises he was often assailed by the infidels, and nearly killed with showers of stones. Nevertheless he conquered. Where orthodoxy was not concerned he was very charitable. He was a severe ascetic in his manner of life, a great lover and admirer of monachism, and of monks.

He had great influence in the eastern Church, was a strenuous partisan in the dissensions that raged during his episcopate, and wrote many controversial tracts. He also composed commentaries on the Scriptures, a continuation of Eusebius's Church History, and a work entitled *Philotheus, or the Monastic Life*.

The last-mentioned work contains the lives of thirty famous eastern monks, whom Theodoret had seen, or whose arts and virtues he had learned from those who had seen them. He had, therefore, good opportunity of knowing the truth or falsehood of what he related concerning these wonderful recluses.

Now, as his narratives contain many prodigies and incredible miracles, we must suppose that either the monks deceived the credulous bishop with their fictitious stories, or that the zealous bishop intended to impose fictions as facts upon the credulous people, or what is most probable, that both in their erring zeal for what they conceived to be religion, united in a system of imposture, that "the truth of God might more abound through their lies to his glory"—for this principle of action ruled the corrupted Church of Christ in those days, in spite of St. Paul's explicit declaration, that the condemnation of such impostors is just. The reader can judge whether there is such imposture in Father Theodoret's stories from the following, which we have taken from his *Philotheus*. In some of them we have adopted Du Pin's abridgment. Others we have translated from the original Greek.

Theodoret died about the year 457 or 458. These lives were written, therefore, about one hundred years after monachism began to spread in Egypt. We have numbered the selected lives, or sketches of lives, according to the order in which they stand in Theodoret's work. We give first a few extracts from the preface.

*Extracts from Theodoret's Preface to his Philotheus.*

We describe that manner of life which teaches philosophy and imitates the conversation of heaven. We depict not the forms of bodies, but adumbrate those of invisible souls and of conflicts within, which cannot be seen, but are fought with the spiritual armor described by St. Paul in Ephesians (vi. 13.)

Such also is the nature of the enemies, in corporeal, invisible, assaulting, obscurely, secretly watching opportunities, suddenly and unexpectedly assailing ; whom the leader himself describes in the same passage of Ephesians, (v. 12.) .

Such enemies has the congregation of the saints. Every one of them is surrounded by many such enemies, who attack one, and then, if put to flight, another. It is not nature that gives the saints their victory ; but the mind drawing into itself the Divine grace ; for when the lovers of Divine beauty are ardent, and resolve to do and suffer all things for him whom they love, they nobly sustain the assaults of the passions, and bravely repulse the weapons of the Devil ; and the body being chastened, (as the Apostle says,) and reduced to servitude, they quell the heat of wrath, and put to rest the madness of the desires. The motions of the soul being quieted by fasting, and lying on the ground, they compel the body to enter into covenant with the soul, and put an end to the natural war within. Having made peace between themselves, they easily put to flight the host of their adversaries, who cannot war against us when they lack the help of our members. For when the eyes are not enticed, nor the ears soothed, nor the touch tickled, nor the mind led astray by evil counsels, they labor in vain who desire to entrap us. Evil demons who war without, cannot overcome a mind fortified by Divine grace, unless some unwatchful thought open some window of our senses, and through it admit the enemy. When the senses are kept under due restraint by the mind, they are taught not to desire sweet odors which naturally soften the mind, and not to gratify the stomach, but make it receive such viands

as are not pleasant, but useful, and only so much of these as may prevent death by starvation. So we are taught also to conquer the sweet tyranny of sleep, so as to admit its use,—not when it naturally comes upon us,—but when they call it, as a brief refreshment of exhausted nature.

These men, therefore, who have entered upon the innumerable labors of life ; who have subdued their bodies by mortifications and afflictions, and know not the pleasure of laughter, but have consumed their whole lives in mourning and tears ; who have esteemed fasting a delicious luxury, laborious vigils as the sweetest sleep, the hard ground as a downy couch, and the exercise of prayer and psalm-singing as an infinite and inexhaustible pleasure—these, I say, who have embraced every sort of virtue,—who would not admire them?—who can praise them enough?

I ask those who may read this religious history, not to put the less faith in its statements, because some things are above their ability to perform ; but to consider that God bestows the gifts of his Holy Spirit on pious souls, and more largely on the more perfect. These things I say to those who are not fully initiated into the mysteries of divine things. Those who are fully initiated know what miracles the Spirit does by men upon men, that unbelievers may be brought to the knowledge of God. He who disbelieves what I shall say, would not believe the miracles done by Moses and Elijah and the apostles.

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### 1. *James of Nisibis.*

As Moses divided the sea and wrote the history of ancient saints by the splendid gift of Heaven's grace, so have we need of grace now, when we undertake to write the lives of saints who flourished a little before and in our time. We must, therefore, invoke their prayers and begin.

Nisibis is a city on the confines of the Roman and Persian empires, and was formerly subject to the Romans. Here was born the great James, who embraced a solitary and quiet life. He



lived on the tops of the loftiest mountains. In the warm season he sought the shady forests, and had no covering but the skies; but in the winter he betook himself to the shelter of a small cave. His food consisted entirely of the spontaneous productions of nature, such as wild fruits and esculent plants. These he ate raw, rejecting the use of fire; and ate just so much of them as would keep him alive. Wool he discarded as too delicate, and made himself a simple coat and mantle out of the coarsest goat's hair. Thus afflicting his body, he assiduously supplied his soul with spiritual nutriment and sharpened his mental eyesight. Hence he saw the future like the holy prophets, and received the grace of working miracles, of which I shall give a few examples.

At this time the madness of idolatry prevailed, but the worship of God was commonly neglected. They treated with contempt those who did not partake of their folly. He had entered Persia for the purpose of visiting and cherishing the plants of grace. He happened to be crossing a brook, when a party of girls who were washing clothes, paying no respect to his new and decent clothes, had the impudence to strip up their coats and expose their nakedness, with unblushing face and shameless eyes, before this holy man as he approached them. Provoked by their behavior, the man of God determined to exercise his miraculous power in punishing them. He cursed the brook, and immediately it dried up. He also cursed the impudent girls, and straightway their hair turned gray, changing color like autumnal leaves. Seeing what had happened, the girls ran to the neighboring town to relate their misfortune. Then they ran back to the old man, and besought him to remit their punishment. Without delay he prayed for the fountain and it resumed its flow; then he prayed for the girls, and their hair turned from white to black again.

Another time, when a Persian judge had, in his presence, delivered an unjust sentence, he remonstrated with the judge; and to prove the sentence unjust, he turned and cursed a huge stone that was lying near. Instantly the huge stone crumbled into

powder ! Terrified at this sight, the judge reversed his unjust sentence.

His miracles having raised his fame to the highest pitch, he was reluctantly drawn into the office of bishop in his own country. He then left his mountain home with a sorrowful heart ; but he did not change his manner of life. The labors of his office were added to those of fasting, lying on the ground, and wearing sack-cloth. He took care of the poor, the widows, and the orphans, and helped those who were wronged or oppressed. By this increase of his labors, his miraculous powers increased.

Certain beggars carried about one of their companions, who feigned to be dead, that they might obtain alms to pay the expense of burying him. They came to James of Nisibis with their pretended corpse. He gave them an alms, and then betook himself to prayer for the supposed dead man.\* Now God so ordered it that the man really died, and when the saint was gone, his companions were astonished to find that he answered them no more. They carried his body again to the saint, whose prayer had so punished him, and confessed their fault. The holy man forgave them, and by his prayers again restored the dead man to life.

He attended the great council of Nice, and was a zealous opponent of Arius, who was tried and condemned by the council. Seven members, who were warm adherents of Arius, obstinately refused to sign the decree of condemnation, (which would be ineffectual unless signed by all.) Divine James exhorted all to give themselves to severe fasting for seven days, and spend the time with him in praying God to do on the occasion what was best for the Church. They complied with the holy man's advice, and God had respect to their prayers and fastings. When the Lord's day came, and most men expected to see the impious Arius, the enemy of God, receive a pardon, a stupendous miracle took place. For when that impious man, in a filthy place, was discharging

\* This superstition of praying for the dead was now coming into vogue. It arose with monkery, like many other superstitions, derived from the heathen.

from his bowels the excrements of his insatiable gluttony, his bowels themselves gushed out; so the wretch fell suddenly and died that filthy death, suffering in a filthy place the punishment of his filthy blasphemies, having received the fatal stroke from the tongue of the great James.\*

After the holy council was dismissed, and every one had returned home, this saint returned also as a valiant conqueror, exulting in the trophies of his piety.

In process of time the great emperor Constantine died. Then Sapor, King of Persia, came against Nisibis, with a great army of horse and foot, and also a large number of war-elephants. The enemy surrounded the city and built machines and bulwarks against it. Ere long they carried their embankments and moveable towers so near the walls, that the archers in the towers shot the defenders on the walls, which were at the same time undermined and shaken with battering-rams below. But all the efforts of the besiegers were vain, being disturbed by the prayers of the holy man. Then they dammed up the waters of the river that flowed by the side of the city; and when these had risen to a great height above the city, they suddenly let them loose against the walls, which not being able to sustain the violence of the flood, were in part undermined and thrown down. Then the enemy raised a great shout, supposing that the city, in spite of its wall of citizens, could now be easily taken. Yet they delayed the assault, because the waters obstructed their approach to the breach in the wall. But the inhabitants betook themselves, meanwhile, more ardently to prayer, having the great James as leader and intercessor. At the same time they exerted themselves strenuously to amend the breach, so that in one day they reared a rough wall to such a height that the assailants could not

\* This is not the only instance in which holy monks on the side of orthodoxy were believed to have killed an unmanageable heretic, by their wonder-working prayers. But the supposed miracle, in this case, is less remarkable than the intense hatred and malignant triumph displayed in the language of Theodoret.

get over it without scaling ladders. Then all besought the man of God to mount the wall and strike the enemy with the weapons of his curses. He mounted accordingly, and viewing the infinite host of the enemy, he prayed God to send on them millions of gnats and flies. While he yet prayed, God answered him as he had answered Moses in Egypt. The noisome insects came in clouds. Men were wounded by them as with Divine weapons; horses and elephants, unable to bear the stings, broke loose and ran away in every direction. The impious king, finding his machines to be useless, his waterflood ineffectual, the wall rebuilt, his army exhausted with fatigue, and stricken with a Divinely-sent intolerable plague, and, as he supposed, the Roman emperor himself upon the walls, dismissed his army and returned home.

We cannot but admire the forbearance of this saint, that when he was cursing the enemy, he did not send thunder and lightning to blast them, or an earthquake to swallow them up, but contented himself with having them stung by gnats and flies.\*

He continued to flourish until his death. When afterwards the city was taken by the Persians, the citizens deserted the place, carrying with them the body of their defender. Imploring his blessing I proceed to another story.

## 2. *Julianus Sabas.*

He was a monk of Osrhoene. He lived long in a den, eating nothing but a little coarse bread of millet, and that but once a week. All his delight was to *sing psalms*. Many persons resorted to him in the desert, and submitted to his discipline, so that in a little time he had a great many religious persons under his government. They all inhabited the same cave, and had no other room

\* With leave of this holy Father of the Church, we would suggest a reason why the plague of gnats may have been preferred by the cursing monk to thunder and earthquake. The stagnant water of the inundation spoken of would naturally breed swarms of gnats in that warm country, while thunder in that warm climate might have required something more than a monk's curse to produce it.

except one, in which they kept the wild herbs on which they fed. Every morning he sent them by pairs into the desert near the cave, with orders to rehearse, each in turn fifteen psalms of David, the rehearser to stand upright, the other to kneel and listen to the psalms. In the evening they all returned to the cave, and after resting a little while, they again betook themselves to chanting psalms.

Theodoret relates many miracles of Julianus, and insists particularly on the journey that he made to Antioch, at the request of Acacius, bishop of Berea, to confirm the catholics of Antioch against the Arians. The reader will recollect, that St. Antony was called to Alexandria on a similar occasion. These monks of the desert had great influence over the multitude, not by any superior knowledge—for they were exceedingly illiterate—but by the vulgar opinion of their wonder-working sanctity, founded on the austerity of their lives and the filthy, emaciated state of their bodies.

The following is one of the miracles related by Theodoret of this psalm-singing monk :

Fleeing once from the persecution of the Arians into a desert, he came at evening to a little town. A wealthy lady seeing him and his companions coming in the garb of saints, went forth to meet him ; and *falling on her knees before him*, she begged that they would accept their hospitality. The old man yielded to her humble importunity, though he had not for forty years looked upon a woman.

Whilst this admirable woman was occupied with waiting on these holy men, her only son, seven years of age, fell into a well. When a great noise was made by her people about this accident, she went out, and learning what had happened, she commanded them to be quiet, and having a cover put over the well, she returned to attend upon her guests, as though nothing serious had occurred. A table having been spread before the saints, the divine old man asked her to call in her son to receive his blessing. When the admirable woman said that he was not well, the old

man persisted in asking her to have him brought in. Then she told him what had happened. The old man ran to the well, and having ordered the cover to be taken off and a light to be brought, he saw the boy sitting upon the water, and beating it playfully with his hands, making sport of what was supposed to have taken his life. A man was let down into the well by a rope, and so they drew the boy out. The lad ran immediately to the old man's feet, saying that he had seen him in the well, holding him in the water so that he could not sink. Such was the reward which the woman received of the blessed old man for her hospitality.

He afterwards, as Theodoret informs us, prayed Asterius, an eloquent Arian bishop, to death, because he was likely to injure the cause of the orthodox bishop of Cyrrhus, by his superior eloquence and skill as a reasoner.

These holy monks seem in the fifth century to have resorted frequently to this method of putting the enemies of orthodoxy out of the way. They seem to have done it, sometimes at least, by instigation of the bishops. When an adversary could not be defeated by argument, or by the sword of the civil power, a miracle-working fanatic was set to imprecate death upon him.

### 3. *Old Simeon.*

He lived a hermit life during a long time. His dwelling was a small cave in which he enjoyed not a single human comfort ; but he diligently conversed with the God of the universe. His food was herbs. His labor gained him from above a rich treasure of grace, so that he commanded the fiercest and strongest wild beasts. He became known not only to the faithful, but even to the unbelieving Jews. A party of them were travelling once to some town beyond the limits of our country, when a violent storm of wind and rain came upon them, and caused them to lose their way. Being unable to see anything before them, they strayed through the wilderness without meeting with a village, or traveller, or even a cave to shelter them, until after long wandering they happened to light upon divine Simeon's cave, as a harbor from the

beating storm. Here they saw a dirty, ragged old man, whose only covering was some torn skins cast over his shoulders. When he saw them, he saluted them affably, and inquired the cause of their coming. When they told him how it had happened, and requested him to show them the way to the next town;—Wait a little while, said he, and I will give you guides who will show you the way. They did so, and while they sat waiting there came two lions, not looking fierce, but fawning upon him as their master. Beckoning and making signs to them, he commanded that they should conduct these men to the road from which they had strayed. Let no one consider this a fictitious story, for its truth is attested by the enemies of our faith—the very men who received the benefit of the miracle ceased not to proclaim it. The fact was told me by the great James, of Nisibis, who said that he was present when they related it to the divine Maro.\* Who would not believe a Jew when he testifies to a Christian miracle?—So asks Theodoret. Yet although the story is apparently so well attested, we must say with Horace, *credat judaeus nonego*. The Jews might believe it—we cannot. But let us hear Theodoret farther.

By miracles of this sort the divine man became known, and drew to himself many of the neighboring barbarians from the desert. Being desirous of quiet, he left his cave, and by a long journey came to the mountain Amanus, which having been formerly carried away by the madness of idolatry, he re-formed by various miracles, and planted the piety which still flourishes there.

It would be a laborious task to relate all his miracles; I will therefore briefly relate one, which is like those of the prophets and apostles.

It was the warm season of harvest, and the sheaves had been gathered into the threshing floors. A certain man, not content with the fruits of his own labor, stole some sheaves from his neighbor, in order to increase his own heap. But God imme-

\* Whose life is afterwards given, by Theodoret, in this work. We shall omit it as uninteresting.

diately marked his condemnation of the theft. The heap was set on fire by a stroke of lightning. The poor wretch ran immediately to the man of God, who lived near, and told of his calamity but not of his theft. But being questioned, his grief compelled him to confess it. The saint admonished him that he might remove the punishment by removing the crime, that the fire would cease as soon as he had restored the stolen sheaves to the owner. The man hastily restored the sheaves. No sooner had he done so, than the old man's prayer and intercession extinguished the fire. This affair soon brought multitudes to him from Antioch, to which the village was subject, to be healed of their various ailments. He shed upon them abundantly of the grace which he had received. But again seeking rest, he resolved to go on pilgrimage to Mount Sinai. No sooner had he announced his purpose, than many other excellent monks resolved to accompany him. They set off, and after a journey of many days, they came to the desert of Sodom, where they happened to see a man's hands stretched forth out of the ground. At first they suspected this strange appearance to be some demon's trick. With many prayers they cautiously approached the place. There they found a narrow hole in the ground, like a fox's burrow; but no person could be seen. By the sound of feet, however, they discovered that the person who had stretched forth his hands was within. The old man looked down into the hole, and besought the occupant to show himself, that they might ascertain whether he was a human being, or some knavish demon who had deluded them with such an appearance. We are hermits seeking quiet, said the old man, and we are journeying through this desert, that we may adore the God of the universe on Mount Sinai. Having heard these and other things, the man of the cavern showed himself; wild in his look, his hair dirty and tangled, his face wrinkled, his limbs shrivelled, and his garment of coarsely-platted palm-leaves, all ragged and filthy.\* He gave them the salutation of

\* This description indicates a monkish saint of high perfections. Look out for miracles, good reader.



peace, and asked them whence they came, who they were, &c. They answered, and then asked questions in turn. He answered, that he also had led a hermit's life, and like them had set off with a hermit brother to visit Mount Sinai. They bound themselves by an oath, that not even death should separate them. "It happened (said he) that when we reached this spot, my companion died. I buried him as well as I could, and in compliance with my oath, I am now digging a sepulchre for myself by the side of his; and here I expect to die, meanwhile rendering my accustomed service of prayer and psalmody to God. My food is palm nuts, which are brought me by a brother who has been ordered to attend upon me. Whilst they were talking a lion appeared at a distance. Old Simeon's companions were frightened at this sight. The hermit of the cave observing this, arose and motioned to the lion to pass round by another way. The beast obeyed instantly, and brought a bunch of dates which he laid at his master's feet, and then by his orders retraced his steps, and laid himself down at a distance. The hermit of the hole then divided the fruit with his visitors, and having joined them in prayers and psalms, he afterwards dismissed them with a fraternal salutation. They went on their way astonished at what they had seen. Now if any one should not credit this story, let him remember how Elijah was fed by ravens. It is easy for the maker of the world to find ways and means to preserve his saints. He preserved Jonah in the whale's belly, and Daniel in the lion's den. But I need not argue to prove the power of God.\*

They went on their way to Mount Sinai. It is said that when they came to the spot where Moses had seen God, the old man fell on his knees and there determined to remain fixed, until he should hear the Lord's voice, assuring him of the divine favor.

\* This is the fallacious sort of argument used by all these romancing Fathers to give currency to their stories of monkish miracles. The argument is of this form: The Holy Scriptures testify that the ancient prophets, Christ and his Apostles, wrought miracles; I and certain monks testify that certain famous monk-saints wrought miracles. Therefore you must either believe our testimony, or reject the testimony of the Scriptures.

When he had continued a whole week in this posture, without tasting food, he heard a voice, telling him to take and eat with a ready mind that which was set before him. He put forth his hands and by groping found three apples, which according to the command he ate ; and he was refreshed, and saluted his brethren with great joy. So he left the place in high spirits, because he had heard the voice of God and received food from his hand. But he afterwards returned and built two cells of religious philosophy ; one on the top of the mountain where he had kneeled, and the other at the foot ; and putting holy wrestlers in both, he acted the part of their master and teacher. There he lived and there he died, a mighty miracle-worker and glittering with the splendors of his holiness.

It was by his intercession in his lifetime, that my blessed mother obtained what I often heard her mention—(that is, a son, myself.) And I pray that I also may receive the benefit of the power with which he is now invested as an intercessor in heaven, and which I know that I shall obtain ; for he, imitating the benignity of the Lord, will certainly accept my prayers.\*

#### 4. *Palladius.*

This celebrated monk was cotemporary with old Simeon, with whom he maintained frequent intercourse.

He lived shut up in a cell near the populous town of Immai. Here he wrought a miracle that gave celebrity to his name.

During a great fair held in the town, a merchant who had collected a sum of money, set off by night on his return home. A robber had watched him until he saw him depart. Getting ahead, he waylaid and murdered and robbed him, near the solitary cell of Palladius ; and to turn suspicion from himself, he laid the body of the murdered man at the saint's door. This being disco-

\* From this language of Theodoret, it is evident that the doctrine concerning demons—that is, saint-gods, conformably to the systems of heathen idolatry, was now fully established. In the Fathers of the three first centuries we meet with nothing like it.

vered the next morning, brought a crowd to the cell. Palladius was charged with the murder, and among the foremost to demand his punishment was the murderer himself.

The holy man, thus surrounded by a clamorous multitude, looked up to heaven, and prayed that God would make known his innocence, and expose the real murderer. Then taking the dead man by the hand, he said, Tell us, O young man, who inflicted this deadly wound upon thee? Point out the guilty man. The dead man followed the saint's hand, sat up, then rose to his feet, turned round and looked at the bystanders, and pointed with his finger at the murderer. The guilty man was seized and stripped—the money and the bloody knife were found upon him. Thus the holy man was cleared, and the murderer convicted, by a miracle which rendered the hermit famous, and showed his standing with God.

Of the same high order of saintship was Abraames. The miracles which he has wrought *since his death*, testify the brightness of his life. *His tomb yet abounds with all sorts of cures*, of which they are witnesses, who, *through their faith* get the benefit of them. May I also who have written of these things, enjoy their help.

[NOTE.—This last statement of Theodoret proves, that in his time the superstitious belief in miraculous cures, performed by dead saints through their relics, was already complete by the year 450.]

### 5. *Aphraates*.

He was a Persian, but embraced Christianity, and was soon distinguished for the monkish virtues of the age. He left his country, where the Magian superstition prevailed, and settled at Edessa, where the people were zealous Christians. Afterwards he went to Antioch to oppose the Arians, and took up his abode in what had been a philosophical lecture-room or school-house. Having learned a little Greek, which was the current language at Antioch, he soon drew multitudes to hear his sermons. Though he used a semi-barbarous dialect, he could express his thoughts

intelligibly. His eloquence was such as to beat down the syllogisms and sophistries of learned professors, so that even magistrates and dignitaries of the Church flocked to hear him, as well as the illiterate multitude. He would accept of no gifts, and even food, except from a single friend who supplied him with bread. He ate nothing else until he grew old : then he added a few herbs after sunset.

When the Arian emperor, Valens, raised a storm against the Trinitarians—expelling them from the churches and other places of worship—Aphraates, with a few coadjutors, encouraged them to persevere in their faith, and exposed himself to the penalties of the law, by standing conspicuously forward as a leader of the persecuted party.

A favorite eunuch of the emperor's was particularly bitter against Aphraates, abused him to his face, and threatened him with death. But he was soon punished for his wickedness : for when the emperor was going to bathe, the eunuch went in to inspect the bathing cisterns, to see that all was duly prepared. By some accident, or as Theodoret pretends, under a sudden impulse of madness, he fell into a vat of hot water and was scalded to death. This was considered by the Trinitarians as a divine judgment upon him for his treatment of Aphraates. It seems also to have frightened the emperor and his courtiers to such a degree, as to save the saint from the banishment which had been intended for him. The emperor's respect for the saint was soon afterwards increased by a very pleasant miracle, which the saint performed for him.

The emperor had a favorite horse, of noble blood and well trained, which was seized with an obstruction of urine, as if he had the gravel. In vain were the most skilful horse-doctors called in : they could do nothing for the imperial favorite, and the emperor was in despair. The groom was a pious man, and had a great faith in Aphraates, so at noon he took the horse to the saint's dwelling, and having explained the nature of the disease, and *professed the orthodox faith*, he begged him to expel the

disease by prayer. The saint immediately went to prayer, and then drawing water from a well, and making the sign of the cross upon it, he ordered it to be carried to the horse. Contrary to his custom the horse drank it. Then, having consecrated some oil, he annointed the horse's belly. At the touch of his holy hand the disease fled, and the horse made water freely. In the evening the emperor, to his astonishment, saw the horse proudly capering for joy. When he inquired how he had been cured, the groom at first hesitated to tell, but being compelled to explain the whole affair, the emperor confessed that Aphraates was a wonderful man. "But," says Theodoret, "he ceased not from his mad career, but continued to rage against the Only-begotten." It appears that, in general, the mighty miracles of orthodox monks had no effect upon Arians, who probably disbelieved them all, but they served to confirm the orthodox multitude, who readily believed them all.

The next miracle that our author relates of this saint, is scarcely less curious, and certainly not less pleasant. A lady of high family, who was married to a dissolute husband, came to the blessed man, lamenting her unhappiness. She said that her husband had been enveigled by some magic art to attach himself to a courtesan, and to hate her, his lawful wife. She told this story at the saint's gate, within which he permitted no woman to enter. He pitied this crying wife, and by prayer broke the force of the magical charm. Then giving her a phial of oil, which he had consecrated by prayer, he directed her to annoint her husband with it. She went home and did so—and thus she transferred his love to herself, and influenced him to prefer the lawful to the unlawful bed.

Again, when the country was infested with swarms of locusts, which like a fire consumed the crops, the fruit trees, the meadows, and even the forests, there came to him a man *of the right faith* and prayed him to save his field, on which he depended for the support of his family and the payment of his tax to the emperor. Imitating the Lord's benevolence, the saint once more ordered a pail of water to be brought to him. He put his hand upon the

water, and prayed God to imbue the fluid with a divine virtue. He then told the man to sprinkle this water round the borders of his field. The man did so, and behold! the water was an impassable barrier to the locusts. The swarms came creeping and flying round the field: but no sooner did they touch the consecrated border than they drew back, affrighted, and were unable to get within the field.

These specimens of his miracles were sufficient, in Theodoret's opinion, to demonstrate the splendor of the grace which dwelt in this holy man.

#### 6. *Peter.*

Peter was a native of Galatia. He lived ninety-nine years, ninety-two of which he spent in the exercises of the monastic life. From his own country he migrated first to Palestine, and thence to Antioch, where he shut himself up in a tomb, drinking nothing but water, and eating bread only, and that once in two days.

He freed many that were possessed with demons; and healed many that were diseased;—among the rest, Theodoret's mother, who was affected in one of her eyes with a disease which no medicine could cure, though every ancient and modern prescription was tried. By the advice of a certain woman, who told her of a cure performed in a similar case by Peter with prayers and the sign of the cross, she hastened to the holy man. She was at this time adorned with ear-rings, golden collars and other jewels, and with a fine silk dress. She had not yet acquired a taste for better things; being in the flower of her youth, she delighted in juvenile ornaments. The blessed man seeing these things, cured her first (says Theodoret) of the disease of fashionable vanity. Tell me, daughter, (said he)—and I give his very words—if a skillful painter had made a perfect picture, and set it up to view, and some dauber should come along, and think to mend it by adding long lines to the eyebrows and eye-lashes, whitening the neck and reddening the cheeks, would not the original artist be angry at this pretended improvement of his work by the

bungler? So do you not think, that the Creator is displeased at these additions to his work by the jeweller and painter, as if you thought his workmanship needed improvement. Do not therefore corrupt the image of God, nor attempt to add what he wisely omitted, nor contrive an adulterated beauty which ensnares those who are chaste.

This excellent woman was caught by the net of Peter, and falling at his feet, she besought him to heal her eye. When he alleged that he was but a man and a sinner, and that God only could heal her, she wept and prayed, and protested that she would not leave him until she received a cure. He told her that if she had faith, God would do it for her sake, not for his. "Now (said he) if you fully and firmly believe, then put away your physicians and receive the remedy from God himself. So saying, he put his hand on her eye, and expelled the disease with the sign of the cross. She went home, washed the paint from her skin, threw away all her ornaments, and lived according to the prescriptions of her spiritual physician. She was now in her twenty-third year, but had no child. Seven years afterwards (says Theodoret) she bore me her only child.

We shall conclude this abridgement of Peter's biography with a case in which he expelled a demon.

A servant cook was brought to him to be healed of a demon. The saint demanded to know of the evil spirit, how he came to have this power over one of God's creatures. The demon like some murderer or burglar before his judge, felt compelled to tell the whole story.

At Heliopolis (said the demon), the master of this servant was sick, and the mistress sat by his bed-side,—while the maids of the house were telling one another how the monks of Antioch live, and what power they had over demons. Like sportive girls as they were, they began to act the part of mad-women possessed by demons; and this same cook, dressed in skins like a monk, exorcised them after the manner of the monks. While they were engaged in this sport, I (said the demon) stood at the door, and

not liking their boastful words about the monks, wished to prove by actual experiment, whether or not the monks really had this boasted power. So I pushed myself into this fellow, desirous of learning how I should be expelled by the monks. Now I have learned the whole process and need no further experiment: so at your command I go out forthwith. So saying, he fled, and the servant was delivered.

[NOTE.—This was a very gentle sort of demon. Curiosity seems to have been his ruling passion. The madness of the possessed in this case, only confirms what may be inferred from other cases, that madness, epilepsy, and diseases of similar character, not curable by medicine, were attributed to evil spirits.]

#### 7. *Theodosius.*

Rhosus is a city of Cilicia on the right as you enter the Gulf of Cilicia. On the east and south of this city, is a large, high mountain covered with forests, where wild beasts have their habitations. In a wood stretching down to the sea from this mountain, the great Theodosius built his little, solitary hut. He was of a noble family in Antioch, but left home and kindred and every worldly pleasure, for the sake of the Gospel pearl of great price. We need not describe his extraordinary abstinence, his lying on the ground, and his hair-cloth garments. In addition to these, he loaded his neck, and loins, and wrists with iron. He also wore his hair all tangled and filthy, and hanging down to his feet, and as it grew still longer, he wrapped it round his middle. [Thus he strikingly resembled a Hindoo Yogi.] He spent all his time praying and singing psalms. He tamed his lust, anger, and pride, as if they had been wild beasts. He added labor to labor, weaving baskets, clearing ground in the forest, and sowing it with seeds to supply his necessities.

In process of time, his fame grew to such a pitch, that multitudes flocked to him from all parts; many desired to imitate his manner of life and to build habitations by the side of his. He



admitted them, and soon had under his training a multitude of disciples. As their labor produced a considerable quantity of merchantable articles, they built a boat, with which they exchanged their wares for necessary supplies of other things. He took the apostle Paul for his pattern, who wrought with his own hands; and he said that it was wrong for those who were burdened with the care of families, and had taxes and tithes to pay, to be obliged to support the poor also, while monks sat idly with folded hands.\*

Such was the reverence of all people for him, that even the fierce Solymi, or Isaurians, as they were afterwards called, who laid waste a great part of the East, sparing neither city nor village, revered the monastery of Theodosius, asking only some bread and the prayers of these holy men. But as these fierce barbarians had captured two bishops, that they might obtain a ransom for them, Theodosius was persuaded to remove to Antioch.

Here Theodoret relates a great miracle performed by Theodosius. He had built his monastery by the sea-shore, at the base of a great precipice of rocks. After disciples had joined him, the scarcity of water was felt to be an inconvenience. He therefore built an aqueduct from the top of the rocks to the monastery, but no water appeared by which the aqueduct could be supplied. But full of faith in God, he ascended to the head of the aqueduct, one morning before his companions had risen to their customary prayers. Then and there he prayed, in confidence that God would hear him, and then smote the dry rock with his staff. The rock was cleft, and a stream of water gushed out like a river, ran down the aqueduct, and after supplying the monastery, poured its surplus waters into the sea. There it still flows (said Theodoret), a standing evidence of the Mosaical grace bestowed on Theodosius.

He died soon after his removal to Antioch; and at his funeral

\* How rational, benevolent, and Christian-like, were these primitive laboring monks, compared with the swarms of lazy beggar-monks who afterwards infested Europe under the patronage of the Popes!

there was a fierce and violent contention among the countless multitude, each one striving in the procession to get nearest the holy corpse, adorned with irons, its long tangled filthy hair, &c.—desirous, we presume, to inhale the odor of sanctity, which the holy relics diffused through the surrounding atmosphere.

8. *Romanus*,—(*literal translation.*)

Romanus, a native of Rhosus, began his holy life outside of the walls of Antioch, at the foot of a mountain, where he continued to live in a narrow cell, which some one else had built. Here he lived to old age without fire or lamp, eating only bread and salt, drinking only water, and rivaling Theodosius in the length and tangles of his hair, his hair-clothing, and his irons. He excelled in simplicity of manners, in modesty of soul, and in the consequent brightness of the rays of grace, which shone out of him. As he had, bee-like, collected these virtues from the Divine meadows, he made of them the honey of true philosophy. He did not only himself enjoy the fruit of his labors; his sweet streams flowed even to strangers: and to those who collected around him, he spoke much with a gentle soft voice of brotherly love, concord, and peace. He made many fall in love with divine things, by the mere sight of him. For who would not be struck with admiration at beholding the old man's wasted limbs, loaded by himself with irons—his garments of rough hair—and his food, barely sufficient to keep him alive. Besides his great and mighty labors, by which he gained admiration and honor from all, he healed many of dangerous and violent diseases, and procured for many barren women the gift of bearing children.

Yet mighty as he was by the Divine Spirit, he called himself a poor man and a beggar. So long as he lived, he ceased not to heap benefits on those whose came to him, by his looks, his discourse, and his miracles; and after he departed hence, and was translated into the company of the angels, he left, surviving his buried body, a memory which flourishes and abides forever: and he is able to succor those who desire his help.

9. *Macedonius.*

This monk lived forty-five years in a cave near Antioch, eating nothing but barley bread. Towards the end of his life he began to eat common bread, fearing that God would call him to account for not taking sufficient nourishment to preserve his life.

Flavianus caused him to come to Antioch, under the pretext of an accusation against him, and then ordained him priest without his knowledge.\* After the mass was over, somebody told him of what had been done to him. He was very angry with all who assisted, but chiefly with Flavianus the bishop; so that they had much ado to pacify him. On the next Lord's day, when they invited him to come to the feast, he replied with downright simplicity to those who came to intreat him, Would you make me a priest the second time? They had great difficulty to persuade him that it could not be done a second time; and it was long before he durst venture to revisit Antioch.

With all his simplicity, he sometimes exhibited both right feeling and good wit, as the following instance will show. He endeavored to prevent the execution of the emperor's orders against the people of Antioch, when he was provoked with them for beating down his statue. He said to the captain, who was charged with the execution of the order to put to death those concerned in the outrage: "We can easily raise those brazen statues again, which we have beaten down; but it is not in the emperor's power

\* The holy bishops of those times played some strange tricks in the exercise of their divine power of ordination, that is, of impressing an indelible mark of the priestly office on men's souls;—which, as the Romanists tell us, is the effect of ordination by a true bishop. Here one makes a silly monk a priest, not only without his consent, but without his knowledge. The monks of those days were generally averse to the priestly office, partly, we may suppose, because the exercise of the office would derange their plan of solitary ascetism, and partly because the labors of the office disagreed with their fixed habits of ascetic trifling—But, Quere: Was this ordination valid on Roman Catholic principles or not? And, Quere; When bishops play such tricks with ordination, what becomes of apostolical succession?

to restore a dead man to life ; can it then be reasonable in him to destroy the images of the living God, for statues of brass and copper ?”

The following are specimens of this saint's miracles.

The wife of a certain rich man was afflicted with the disease of voracity—which some ascribed to a demon within her, and others thought to be a natural infirmity : however, so it was, that after eating up thirty hens every day, she was not satisfied, but wanted more. As she was thus devouring her husband's estate, the neighbors in pity begged the divine man to come to her assistance. He came, and having prayed to God, he dipped his hand in water and made the sign of the cross. Then he made her drink the water. Thus, he so effectually cured her greediness, that she was afterwards satisfied with one little bit of a hen daily.

He also expelled from a young girl a demon, who alleged that he had not entered her voluntarily, but by the force of a love charm that a certain young man had used. The father of the girl, instead of waiting for the cure, immediately prosecuted the young fellow before the judge, and summoned Macedonius as the chief witness. The judge [finding we suppose that the case was of too spiritual a nature for him] left the whole matter to the management of the saint. The saint then made the demon in the girl confess the whole affair, and then drove him out and cured the girl. But he would not allow the young man to be punished for his love-sorcery, but procured his pardon that he might repent.

Theodoret also relates that his parents were childless during thirteen years after marriage, by reason of his mother's impotency. She was resigned, but he went about anxiously seeking help from the saints. Others promised to pray for him ; but Macedonius expressly promised him a son. But three years passed away, and no son came. The anxious husband again visited the holy man, and claimed the promise. “ Send your wife to me,” said the saint. He sent her. When she came, he said that he would pray, and then she should have a son, but that

she must give him back to the giver. She professed that the salvation of her soul and deliverance from hell, was her only desire. "The bountiful Giver will bestow upon you a son," said he. The wife returned home, and the fourth month afterwards, she proved to be pregnant.\*

#### 10. *Maisymus.*

This was a monk of Theodoret's own diocese of Cyrus. He never changed his garment; but continued to stitch and darn it whenever it became rent and ragged. He is said to have had two vessels—one of corn and another of oil, which, though he was ever giving out of them to the poor, never became exhausted.

The lord of the village where he lived—a courtier of Antioch—exacted his rents with undue severity, in spite of the intercession of the saint in behalf of the poor husbandmen. When this unmerciful lord had finished his work of exaction, he mounted his carriage to drive off; but the vehicle stuck fast in the road, and neither mules nor men could move it an inch, until this proud lord, being told what was probably the matter, went and kneeled to the ragged saint, begged his pardon, and prayed for liberty to drive off. The holy man was propitiated by this humiliation, so that when the lord mounted again, the carriage rolled away as glibly as he could desire.

#### 11. *Acepsimas.*

This was another monk of the same diocese of Cyrus. He passed sixty years in the same cell, without seeing or speaking with any body. The lentils and waters on which he subsisted were handed to him through a hole in the wall of his cell. The hole was made sloping on purpose to prevent the saint from being seen through it. But he would sometimes steal out at night in search of water.

\* Divers holy men were concerned in Theodoret's conception. See what he says of this important matter in the lives of Old Simeon and Peter.

Once he ventured to make a sly excursion by daylight. A shepherd happened to meet him, and mistaking him for a wolf—so wild and shaggy did he look—he began to sling stones at him. But the sling was miraculously arrested, and his arm so paralyzed that he could not move until the old man forgave him : for the poor shepherd found out presently that he was no wolf, but a saint, and humbly begged his pardon.

Another time a fellow had the curiosity to climb to a tree that overlooked the uncovered cell, that he might see what this hermit did in his cell. But he became so paralyzed in the one half of his body, that he could not get down again ; and they had to fell the tree before he could be released.

### 12. *James.*

This saint, and those hereafter mentioned, were yet alive when Theodoret wrote. James was often troubled by apparitions of the Devil in divers shapes and ways. There is, in his history, a remarkable thing concerning relics.

Theodoret had received with great respect some relics said to be of John the Baptist. The hermit, doubting whether they were not of some other martyr named John, refused to receive them as genuine. But he was reproved in a vision by John the Baptist himself, for his rejection of them. John appeared, and gave him assurance that they were really his. Then the hermit desired Theodoret to bring them to him: This story shows that the Baptist, and, of course, other saints, too, began in this century to be very solicitous that their relics should be duly honored. In earlier times they had seemed to care nothing about their relics, no more than other dead men.

This James lived at first in a small but, and afterwards in the open air, with only Heaven for his covering during the extremes of heat and cold. He had iron chains round his neck and waist, and four other chains hung down from his neck—two before and two behind. He had also chains about his arms. His only food was lentils. For three days and nights he was often so covered

with snow, while he was prostrate and praying, that he could hardly be seen. He was celebrated for the many miracles that he wrought.\*

NOTE.—In the work of Theodoret, the next in order is the great St. Symeon Stylites. But, as we shall compile his biography out of several authors, and connect it with a notice of some other pillar saints, we now proceed to notice a few other remarkable saints in this work of Theodoret.

### 13. *Baradatus.*

Theodoret remarks that the great saints invented divers ways of making themselves uncomfortable. Some lived in caves, some in tents, cells, &c., which were sufficiently contracted, sufficiently close, or open to the weather, and sufficiently filthy, to have a sanctifying influence upon the occupant. Other saints rejected all shelter, and exposed themselves naked to the elements. Some maintained a perpetually standing posture. Thus like the Hindoo saints before them, they studied variety of bodily mortifications. To the admirable Baradatus is due the credit of being the first among Christian saints, who maintained a constantly stooping posture. At first he was content to enjoy the sufferings that a very narrow, open hut, could afford. This did pretty well, as it did not admit of his lying down; but then, it allowed him to stand upright, and there is a possibility of comfort in a standing posture. A happy thought struck him. He got, by some means, a heavy flat rock laid across the low walls of his hut. This confined him to a stooping posture, the most painful of all. The Indian Yogi's scheme of standing upon one leg was inferior to it. Baradatus was satisfied with the pain and the fame that his invention gave him.

But the bishop of Antioch, fearing, probably, that he would faint under the agony of his position, ordered him at last to come out. He obeyed; and ever since (says Theodoret) he stands

\* We have copied this paragraph from Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. History, A. D. 479.

with uplifted hands, continually praising God, having his body so completely wrapt in skins, as to leave only a small breathing hole at his nose and mouth. All this he endures (says his admiring biographer) with a feeble and sickly body, which his *love of God* compels to undergo this labor. He now excels in understanding, asks and answers questions excellently, and sometimes argues better than those versed in Aristotle's logic.

NOTE.—From this and other passages of the Fathers of these times, it is evident that the Church had now adoped from the oriental philosophy the notion, that voluntary mortification of the body drew supernatural light into the soul. These holy Fathers, in compliance with apostolical language, called it divine grace; but then they represent the monkish saints as working it into themselves by the power of their ascetic exercises. Divine light, and miraculous power, followed bodily mortifications and mental abstraction from all worldly things, as the effect follows the cause. The ascetic's virtue was not the effect of divine grace, but the cause of it. The merit of the work was all his own: the Divine gifts that followed were of God's grace, but they were none the less a condign reward for what the saint had done by the voluntary exertion of his natural ability.

#### 14. *Thalaleus.*

This was another original genius among the saints of the age. But before we describe an invention of his, we must give Theodoret's account of his outset.

He presents us a wonderful spectacle (says Theodoret.) Nor do I speak merely from the reports of others; I have been myself a witness of the wonderful wonder. Twenty furlongs from Gabalai, a small but elegant city, he settled himself on a certain hill, where was a temple dedicated to demons, and honored formerly with many sacrifices. Here he built himself a little hut.

They atoned, they said, by those sacrifices, for their ferocious cruelties; for they slew many of those passing by, both men and



beasts. So when they saw him approaching, they endeavored to terrify him; but were not able, because he was protected by faith, and grace fought for him. Hence, inflamed with wrath and driven to madness, they attacked the trees growing there; for on that hill grew many fig trees and olive trees, of which they tore up more than five hundred immediately. This I learned from the neighboring rustics, who were formerly involved in the darkness of impiety; but received the light through the teaching and miracles of this saint. As the hostile demons could not expel the wrestler of philosophy by these means, they tried to frighten him away by howling and showing lights about him in the night. But as he derided all their insults, they left him at last and fled.

Theodoret then describes his ingenious machine for cramping himself. He prepared himself two wheels, each two cubits, or about three and a half feet, in diameter. He connected these wheels by nailing boards to the rims at intervals all round, so as to make the wheels stand one cubit apart; the board being fastened by one end to the upper wheel, and by the other end to the lower, like the rungs of a double cogwheel. He then set in the ground three tall pieces of timber, connected at the top by three cross pieces, so as to stand firmly, with their lower ends farther apart than the upper. Within this frame he suspended his double wheel, into which he then squeezed himself. Having a space of only two cubits wide and one cubit high, he had to bend himself double, with his chin touching his knees. In this position he spent ten years. As he was a rather large, fat man when he entered the machine, we may easily conjecture how he felt, and how he looked, and how he—smelt. I visited him in this position, (says Theodoret,) and found him intent upon the Divine Gospels, and deriving much profit from them. I inquired of him why he adopted this new sort of life. He answered me in the Greek tongue, (for he was a Cilician,) I am laden, said he, with many sins, and believing in the threatened punishments, I devised this sort of life, in order that by inflicting moderate torments upon

my body, I might escape the severity of those impending over me ; for they are harder than these, not only in degree but in kind, for they are involuntary, and what is involuntary is much severer than what we willingly undergo. Now, if I can by these voluntary pains diminish those which are expected, I am a great gainer. I greatly admired his subtlety, who not only strove for salvation as the rules prescribed, but invented additional contests for himself.

Notwithstanding Bishop Theodoret's admiration of this fanatical monk's principles, we consider them as purely heathenish. One would think that neither the bishop nor his self-torturing monk had ever heard of salvation by grace without works, through the merits of Jesus Christ. We see in their principles the seed from which, not long afterwards, the doctrine of purgatory grew. Indeed this heathenish doctrine already existed in a crude state in the minds of these self-tormenting monks.

The neighbors testified also (says Theodoret) that by his prayers many miraculous cures had been wrought, not only upon men, but upon camels, asses and mules. Hence that whole people renounced their hereditary impiety, and were illumined with the heavenly light. By their assistance, he pulled down the old temple of demons, and erected a great church to the triumphant martyr.

### 15. *Marana and Cyra.*

At the close of his work, Theodoret gives us some specimens of the female saints of his time. Here we have a worthy pair of them.

Marana and Cyra were ladies of Berœa, of illustrious families and refined education. But despising all these things, they had a small space inclosed with high walls, and getting themselves inside, they had the door walled up, leaving only a small hole in the wall. The servant maids, who wished to imitate their manner of life, occupied an inclosure outside. The ladies had a hole

looking into this inclosure, so that they could watch the maids and stir them up to diligence in their exercises. Their own pen had no cover. Through the opening before mentioned they received supplies and conversed with the women who visited them during the season of Pentecost. The rest of the year they kept an unbroken silence. It was Marana alone who ever spoke with visitors, for Cyra was never heard to utter a word.

They wore irons of such weight, that Cyra, the weaker of the two, was bent to the ground by them, and was unable to stand upright. Their garments were so long behind as to trail on the ground, but came only to the middle in front, covering, however, the head, face, and hands.

I often saw them, being let into the yard through the gate, which they opened for me out of respect for my episcopal dignity. I saw them loaded with a weight of iron too heavy for a strong man. With many entreaties I got them off; but they put them on again after I went away. They wore an iron collar about the neck, an iron girdle about the loins, and manacles and fetters upon the hands and feet.

They have pursued this manner of life during forty-two years, and yet persevere with as much alacrity as ever. They think of the beauty of their spouse who shows them the crown of victory. Hence without sadness they bear rain, and snow, and sun, and experience joy in their sufferings. Three times they have, like Moses, fasted forty days without food or drink. Three times they have, like Daniel, spent three weeks without food. Once when they went a twenty days' journey on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they ate nothing by the way, either going or returning. Likewise they once visited the church of St. Theckla, in Isauria; they also fasted by the way. To such a pitch did the Divine love charm, madden, and stimulate their souls. Thus adorning the female sex, and an example to other women, they live, and will, doubtless, win the crown of life.

Such is Theodoret's account of these female saints. What a contrast to our fashionable ladies of the world! Instead of fine

covered houses, they chose for their dwelling a little, uncovered pen, in which their beauty was invisible to gentlemen's eyes, and no little marred, we suspect, by excessive fasting, and by exposure to all weathers, in a climate which was none of the mildest. Instead of jewels of gold and precious stones, they wore heavy chains of rusty iron; instead of perfumed robes of silk, rough haircloth, never changed nor washed. No curling tongs or comb ever touched their flowing locks. Their aim was to improve, not their beauty but their sanctity; and when we consider that they were confined thus during forty years in a sty, perhaps two yards in diameter, we may certainly conclude that the odor of their sanctity became very strong, if not very sweet.

16. *Domina, the weeping Saint.*

Admirable Domina (says Theodoret) emulated the life of Divine Mars, before mentioned.\* She established a little hut in her mother's garden. It was built of reeds. In this she spent whole days, weeping incessantly, watering not only her cheeks, but her garment of hair-cloth. At cock-crowing she betook herself to the neighboring church, with others, both male and female, to praise the Lord of the Universe. In the evening she again resorted to the same holy place, thinking herself, and teaching others to think, that it was the most sacred of all places. She persuaded her mother and brothers to bestow their goods upon this church.

Her food was lentils soaked in water. She sustained this labor with a body reduced to a skeleton and half dead. Her thin parchment-like skin, covered bones from which the fat and muscles had wasted away. She showed herself to all eyes, but she

\* We have omitted to notice this divine saint; but we will here mention a fact concerning him. When he died, the neighboring villages fought like tigers for the possession of his body. Those of the nearest village at last beat off the others, got hold of the precious carcass and built a great church over it. "Even to this day, (says Theodoret) they derive benefit from the honors which they pay the victorious saint. Even I enjoy his blessing, the remembrance of him serving me instead of a tomb."

looked at no one's face, nor exposed her own: for she kept herself completely wrapped up, and was bent to a kneeling posture. She spoke with a feeble voice, almost inaudible, but always with tears. She often took my hand, and moving it to her lips, she shed so many tears upon it, that they dripped from it when she let it go. What language can do justice to her, who abounding in the riches of philosophy, weeps like the neediest beggar, and moans and groans continually. It is her ardent love of God, which, kindling her soul with divine contemplation, presses out these tears, and stimulates and urges her longing soul to depart from this life.

Nor is she wanting in other virtues, but does what she can for other distinguished wrestlers, in the place, and for those who visit them, telling them to lodge with the village pastor, and sending them all needful supplies *out of her mother's and brother's stores*, which receive a blessing from being so used. To me also, when I visit the place, in the southern part of my diocese, she sends bread and fruit and soaked lentils.

But how far would it carry my discourse, if I should speak of all her virtues, when I should say something of other women who have imitated her.\*

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Many other women have embraced a solitary life, whilst many others have preferred to associate together, two hundred and fifty, more or less, in a community, eating the same food, sleeping on bare leaves or straw, working in wool, and consecrating their tongues to sacred hymns. There are countless numbers of such philosophical schools,† not only in our region, but through all the

\* Poor weeping Domina! Our author has made a pathetic story of her sorrowful life. We trust that her tearful life was turned into one of rejoicing when she rested from her labors. But we cannot forbear to execrate that gloomy superstition, which converts the graces and consolations of the gospel into a perpetual fountain of tears, and an incitement to self torture, as if Christ could profit us nothing.

† φιλοσοφίας σχολαί, Schools of philosophy. The Fathers were not far

East, namely, in Palestine, Egypt, Asia,\* and Pontus, and through all Europe. Whence it appears that Christ, born of a virgin, has honored virginity; nature has produced meadows of virginity, bearing to the Creator those odoriferous flowers that shall never wither, and making no distinction between male and female virtue.

Many are the wrestling places of piety, as I said, both for men and women, not only with us in Syria, but in Palestine, Cilicia and Mesopotamia. In Egypt there are monasteries, which they say contain five thousand monks, working and praising God, the while; and making by their labor not only a sufficiency for their own wants, but a surplus for strangers and needy persons.

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Theodoret concludes by saying that he has written these lives for the imitation of others, as exhibiting what he esteemed the most perfect pattern of the Christian life. The perusal of these lives will therefore give a clearer idea than any general description can give, of the prevailing opinion, in those days of practical Christianity. The account that we are about to give of the pillar-saints will heighten the picture.

wrong, when, by adopting this language, they likened monkery to the Gentile Philosophy, from which it came.

\* The province so often mentioned in the Acts and Epistles of which Ephesus was the capital.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE PILLAR SAINTS.

*Symeon Stylites.*

Preface, by the Translator.

WE come now to the most extraordinary, and if we except St. Antony, the most famous, of all the ancient monks. It is not without reason that Theodoret doubted whether his biography of him would gain credit with posterity. Yet extraordinary as the statements are, we feel obliged to admit, that after due allowance is made for the fiction and exaggeration, which nearly always mix themselves with the truth in monkish stories, there will remain in the history of this great pillar saint some wonderful facts. Of all men whose history has been preserved, this Symeon of the Pillar exhibits perhaps the most striking instance of the power of human endurance under privation and suffering, and of fanatical resolution to carry this power to the utmost stretch—and all for the ambitious purpose of making himself the most mighty and the most famous of all the ascetics.

He gained his end; for Theodoret, his first and chief biographer, begins his life by saying; “Symeon the Great, the wonder of the world, is known to all who obey the Roman Empire,—to the Persians, Medes, and Ethiopians;—nay, the fame of his labors and of his philosophy, has reached even the wandering Scythians.” This was written in the monkish hero’s

lifetime, while multitudes from many nations, barbarous as well as civilized, were yet crowding around his mountain pillar, anxious to see the wonderful saint, to hear his oracles, and to experience the healing power of his benediction.

### LIFE OF SYMEON.

Symeon of the Pillar was born in a village called Sisan, on the confines of Syria and Cilicia. He was employed by his parents in feeding sheep. When a deep snow fell, the sheep were kept at home, and young Symeon, having leisure, went with his parents to church. He told Theodoret long afterwards, that on one of these occasions, he heard the Gospel read which pronounces those happy who weep and mourn, and those miserable who laugh; and calls them blessed who are pure in heart;—and says other things of like sort:—that he asked a man who was present, how one might attain to those things;—and that the man answered by referring to the monastic life, and explained to him the sum of its philosophy. Thus he received the seeds of the word in the deep soil of his heart. Then, as he said, he went into the neighboring church of the martyrs, and there, with knees and forehead on the ground, he prayed that God would lead him in the perfect way of piety. As he continued long in this posture, a sweet slumber stole upon him, and a vision of this sort presented itself. “Methought (said he) that I was digging a foundation for myself, and that I heard one who was standing by say that I must dig the trench deeper: but when I had carried it to the required depth, and then endeavored to take some rest, he commanded me to dig again; and so he kept telling me three or four times, until at last he said that the depth was sufficient, and commanded me now to build upon the foundation thus prepared, without additional labor.”

Admonished by this vision, he rose and went to a monastery, where he spent two years with the monks; but being desirous of higher attainments in virtue, he went to the village of Teleda; where two distinguished monks, Ammianus and Eusebius, had



established their monastic wrestling place. Symeon, however, joined another monastery, which some disciples of Eusebius had established. The present abbot of this monastery was Heliodorus, who had been taken into the establishment when he was only three years of age, and had lived in it now during sixty-two years. He was so ignorant of the world that he did not know a pig from a hen. But he was nevertheless a great monk, and with him our hero Symeon spent ten years in the exercises of piety, going far ahead of his eighty associates; for they took food every second day, whereas he ate but once a-week. This long abstinence did not please the officers of the monastery, who continually chided him for what they called his immoderateness. But in vain did they chide; for Symeon would have his week's fast notwithstanding. Theodoret says that the superior of the monastery—a successor of Heliodorus—told him of another piece of Symeon's ascetic severity. He twisted himself a cord of palm-leaves, so rough that it could hardly be touched, and bound it round his middle, next to his skin, drawing it so tight that it ulcerated a circle of flesh all round his body. After he had endured the torture for ten days or more, and drops of blood began to fall from the lacerated flesh, he was asked by a certain brother what caused the blood. His answer was, that nothing troubled him. But this brother forcibly thrust in his hand, and discovering the cause, he went and informed the abbot. With much chiding and reproof, the abbot prevailed on him to take off the cord; but he could not persuade him to apply a remedy to the ulcers. When they saw him run into other excesses of the same sort, they commanded him to leave the monastery, lest he should lead brethren of weaker bodies to attempt things above their strength.

He went forth, then, and sought the most desert part of the mountain on which the monastery was situated. He found there an empty cistern, into which he let himself down, and there he chanted the praises of God.

After five days the abbot and the brethren repented of their harsh treatment towards him, and two brethren were sent to fetch

him back. These happening to meet some shepherds in the mountain, inquired whether they had seen a person of his description. Being directed to the cistern, they looked in and raised a shout of joy when they saw him at the bottom. But as it was easier to get in than to get out again, they had to fetch a rope and draw him out by main force.

After staying with them a short time, he went to the village of Telanessus, at the foot of the mountain, where he happened to find a little, old, deserted hut, in which he shut himself up for the space of three years. Striving [like an ancient Hindoo ascetic] to rise step by step in the severity of his exercises, he resolved at last to equal Moses and Elijah in a continual fast of forty days. He requested Bassus, a country bishop who made frequent circuits around the villages, to leave him no food in his hut, and to close up the door by daubing it outside with mud, till the forty days were expired. Bassus admonished him of the hazard of the undertaking, and the sin of starving himself to death. Symeon then consented to take in with him ten loaves and a pitcher of water, to be used in case of necessity. So he was shut in according to his desire, and his door sealed outside with mud. When the forty days were expired, Bassus opened the door and found him lying almost dead, and the loaves and pitcher untouched. But by washing his mouth, and *laying on him the symbols of the divine mysteries*—the crucifix, we suppose, and the sacramental bread and wine—he revived him, so that he could rise and take a little food.

From that time to the present (says Theodoret) twenty-eight years, Symeon has yearly spent forty days without food or drink.

These Mosaic fasts are related with all gravity, and on apparently good authority; yet we must take leave to doubt whether the Ruler of the world would work such a miracle for twenty-eight years in succession, or even for once, in order to establish in the Church a fanatical and heathenish system of monkery run mad, like this of Symeon Stylites.

Theodoret tells us that in these annual fasts, he was accus-

tomed to stand continually during the first days, praising God, until his exhaustion compelled him to sit down, and in this posture to finish the divine liturgy of praise. Then during the last days he lay down. But after, he took his station on a pillar, where he had not room to lie, or even to sit with safety, he tied himself to an upright post on the pillar, and thus kept himself in a standing posture during the whole forty days. At last, however, he could dispense with the post, and stand without support during the whole fast of forty days and forty nights. So says the biographer, and he ought to have known the fact, for he visited the place, and saw, or was told, what he related, or he wilfully wrote what he neither saw nor heard.

Three years, as before mentioned, he stayed in the hut ; then he ascended to the top of the mountain which he afterwards made so famous. There he confined himself to a prescribed space, by means of a chain, twenty cubits long, fastened by one end to his ancle, and by the other end to a rock. Thus chained like a Hindoo ascetic, a madman, or a wild beast, he employed himself in contemplating the heavens, and endeavoring mentally to penetrate into things above the heavens ; for that iron chain, says Theodoret, did not impede the flight of the mind. We admit the truth of that observation.

Symeon's mountain was about thirty-seven miles from Antioch,\* and within the disocese of its bishop. Meletius, the bishop, paid him a visit, and advised him to lay his chain aside as useless, because his own reason was sufficient to confine him to his prescribed limits. The saint obeyed, and sent for a blacksmith to unfasten the chain. A band of skin had been put round his ancle to prevent the chain from hurting his flesh. When this was cut loose, upwards of twenty large bugs were found nestled beneath. "These" (says Theodoret) "the admirable Meletius affirmed that he saw. I have mentioned this circumstance (continues the biographer) to show the man's wonderful patience ; for where he could have killed them all by pressing the skin, he

\* Evagrius, L. i. c. 24.

patiently endured their bites." One would think that Symeon was indeed a Hindoo yogi, or Boodhist monk, conscientiously careful not to kill even a fly or a bug.

This mountain saint soon gained what seems to have been one end at least of his singular scheme of ascetic severity,—and that was fame. Henceforward we shall give a literal translation of Theodoret to the end of his narrative.

Now his fame flying through all mouths, people gathered from all quarters to see him, many from the distance of several days' journey. Some brought paralytics; some asked help for the sick; others prayed that they might become fathers, a gift which they had not received from nature, but which they hoped to receive through him. Those who received what they sought returned home with joy, and by proclaiming what benefits they had obtained, they drew multitudes of others to the place. Thus a constant stream of visitors came pouring in from all sides. There seemed to be a sea of people in the place. These multitudes were not only from our region (of Syria), but Ishmaelites, Persians, Iberians and Homerites (from southern Arabia.) From the distant shores of the west also came Spaniards, Britons, and Gauls—Italians too of course. It is said that our saint's name was so celebrated, that in all the shop-doors they set up little images of him, promising themselves some protection from these representatives of the saint.\*

Because innumerable multitudes crowded around, and endeavored to touch him, thinking to extract a blessing out of the sheepskins that he wore. Thinking these great honors absurd, and then feeling annoyed by them, he devised the plan of taking his station on a pillar.† At first he ordered it to be built six cubits high, then twelve, afterwards twenty-two, and now he has

\* Here we see the germ of image-worship, afterwards introduced to make the Christian imitation of heathen worship complete.

† We fear that the love of fame had more to do with the pillar scheme than saint-like modesty, which would have led him to concealment instead of display.

had it raised to thirty-six cubits;\* for he longed to fly to heaven and to withdraw from this earthly abode. For my part I believe that he was led by divine counsel to take this lofty station; wherefore I pray those who are disposed to find fault to hold their tongues from rash speeches; and to consider that God has ordered these things for the benefit of those who are slow of understanding; for he commanded Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot; Jeremiah to put on iron chains and collars; Hosea to take a wife of fornication, &c. God, the Universal Governor, commanded these things to be done, for the sake of those who would not hear discourses, nor listen to prophecies. The novelty of such spectacles draws attention and impresses divine truth on the careless mind. The Ruler of the universe adds these new and various modes of life to piety, as signs or characters; and thus excites the tongues of unbelievers as well as of believers to praise.† Facts prove the truth of these remarks. How many thousands of Ishmaelites did that standing upon the pillar illuminate? Drawn by this brilliant light set upon a candlestick, and shining as the sun, Iberians, Armenians and Persians, came near and were baptized. Ishmaelites came in companies of two or three hundred, and sometimes a thousand, and renounced with a loud voice the error of their fathers, and under the rays of this brilliant sun trampled upon their idols. Forswearing the orgies of Venus, they were initiated into the divine mysteries. They received laws from the sacred tongue [of the saint], and bidding adieu to their ancient customs, they renounced the eating of wild asses and camels.‡ I have myself heard them renounce their old impiety, and profess the evangelical doctrines.

\* Nicephorus, a later writer, says it was forty cubits high,—that is seventy feet. Our saint was therefore very conspicuous to the admiring multitude.

† All this is well reasoned in respect to the prophets, and contains the true solution of those singular actions. But to make the same applicable to Symeon, we must suppose that he practiced no imposture, and was moved by no love of fame. Let them believe it who will.

‡ Abstinence from animal food was a principle of ancient Brahminism and Boodhism, and also of our hero of the pillar.

Once I encountered great danger from them. When he ordered a great company of them to come near me and receive sacerdotal benediction, saying that they would derive great benefit from it; they came rushing with barbaric impetuosity; some plucked me before, some behind, and some at each side; and those who were farther off, came climbing over others, and stretching out their hands, pulled my beard or plucked my clothes. They would have torn me in pieces among them, if a great shout had not dispersed them. Such light did the despised pillar emit into the minds of the barbarians.\*

I knew of another affair, which happened thus. One tribe besought the divine man to send their chief a prayer and benediction. Another tribe present, requested him not—but to send the prayer and benediction to their chief, because the former was a very unjust man, whereas their chief was a stranger to injustice. After a long altercation in barbaric style, the tribes rushed upon one another to battle. I exhorted them earnestly to desist, because the holy man could impart a blessing to both their chiefs. But the latter tribe denied that the former ought to have his blessing, while these endeavored to deprive the others of it. But Symeon threatening them from above, and calling them dogs, hardly quelled their strife. I have related this incident *to show how strong their faith was*; for they would not have raged so against one another, had they not believed that the divine man's blessing had the greatest efficacy.

I saw another celebrated miracle performed. A certain man came in—he was a chief of the Saracens,—and besought the divine head (Symeon), that he would help a man whose palsied limbs were on the road. When the paralytic was brought forward into the saint's presence, the saint required him to renounce the impiety of his ancestors. When he signified compliance, the saint asked if he believed in the Father, the Only-begotten Son, and

\* Yes, a clear and beautiful light it was, as the behavior of these Christian converts of the Pillar shows! The next instances give further illustrations of Pillar religion.

the Holy Spirit. When he had professed this faith, then says the saint,—Believing in these names, arise! When he had risen, the saint commanded him to carry the chief on his shoulders. The chief was a very large man; but the restored paralytic took him up and walked away with him, while the spectators broke forth in loud praises to God.\* In this he imitated the Lord, who bade the paralytic carry his bed.

Divine Symeon performed innumerable miracles, among the rest another not inferior to the former.

A certain Ishmaelite, of those who believe in Christ, a man of respectable station, had made a vow to God that he would abstain from all animal food, but had dared to violate it by eating a piece of a chicken. God designing to convince him of his sin, and to honor his servant who had been witness of the vow, converted the chicken's flesh into stone, whilst he was eating, so that he could not eat any more of it. Astounded at the prodigy, the barbarian went quickly to the saint, confessed his sin, and publicly begged pardon of God, calling upon the saint also for help, that by the *omnipotence of his prayers*, he would free him from his guilt. Many saw this miracle, that is, they handled a piece of the chicken, which was composed of stone and bone.†

I was not only a witness of this miracle, but a hearer of a prediction of future events.

Two years beforehand, he predicted the great drought, and the year of dearth, famine and pestilence, that followed. He said that *a rod of chastisement for men was seen by him, and whips that he would bring who gave the signs.*

Another time he foreshowed an irruption of the locusts; but said that it would bring no great damage, as the divine clemency would follow the punishment. Thirty days having elapsed, an

\* This story of the paralytic looks very suspicious. How easy was it for the managers of this saintly impostor, to get a scene enacted before a crowd of ignorant barbarians, already prepossessed with the notion that this pillar-saint was omnipotent. Even Father Theodoret, if not a manager, was ready to swallow everything.

† This chicken story was probably founded on a fossil bone.

innumerable multitude arose like a cloud darkening the sun. This we saw ; but it injured only the food of brutes.

He also foretold to me, fifteen days before it happened, the death of an enemy of mine,—which came to pass accordingly. I know of many such things, which I omit for brevity's sake.

He had also great glory with the king of Persia—as they relate who were sent as ambassadors to him. He diligently inquired of the man's manner of life, and of the nature of his miracles. His queen also, they say, asked for oil which the saint had blessed, and received it as a very great gift. The king's domestics, also, being moved by his fame, though they had heard much said against him by the Magi, yet inquired particularly ; and on hearing the truth, called him a divine man. But the multitude of inferior servants, coming to the mule-drivers and to the servants and soldiers of the embassy, offered money, with entreaties for some of the oil of benediction.

But the queen of the Ishmaelites being barren, and wishing for children, first sent some of the chief men with the petition that she might become a mother. After she got her wish, and bore a young king, she took the child and went to the divine old man. As all women were excluded from his presence, she sent the infant to him, with the petition that he would bless him. This (said she) is your sheaf: I with tears sowed the seed of prayers, *you made the seed fruitful.*

But his daily miracles are above all description. Night and day, he stands before all eyes. For having taken away the gates, and broken down the walls that enclosed his pillar, he presents himself a stupendous spectacle ; now standing a long time, then bending himself frequently in adoration to God. Many who stand by, count those adorations. A man who accompanied me once, counted 1244, and then desisted from weariness. But always when he bent himself, he brought his forehead quite to his toes. For, as his stomach received food but once a week, and then but little, his back was easily bent.

But they say, that from his continual standing, an inveterate



ulcer broke out in each foot, and became a constantly running sore. But none of these things shake his philosophy ; he bears bravely everything that happens to him, and conquers all suffering, voluntary or involuntary, by alacrity of mind.

For a cause that I shall relate, he was once induced to show this ulcer. There came from Rabaena a worthy and honored Christian, who said to him, Tell me in the name of divine truth, are you a man or an incorporeal being ? Those who stood by, were grieved at this question ; but he commanded them to be silent, and thus addressed the questioner : Why do you ask this question ?—Because (said he) I hear people boasting that you neither eat nor sleep, as human beings must do. Symeon ordered the ladder to be applied, and the visitor to come up. He made him feel his hands, then his body under his clothes, then examine his feet, and even his fetid ulcers. The man wondered at the size of the ulcers ; and being thus assured that the saint did sometimes take food, he descended ; and coming to me, related the whole story.

In the time of religious solemnities, observed by the Church, he stood from sunrise until sunset, with his hands stretched towards heaven, without sleep or remission of his labor. But with all his labor, the greatness of his actions and frequency of his miracles, his modesty is such as would become the lowest of mankind. He is easy of approach, affable and pleasant, answering every body who speaks to him, whether he be a mechanic, a peasant or a beggar. He has also received liberally of the Lord the gift of teaching. Twice a day he delivers homilies, and waters the ears of the congregation, discoursing skilfully, and giving demonstration of the Holy Spirit. As a judge too he delivers just sentences. He attends to these things after the ninth hour, for he prays all night and all day, until that hour. Then he first delivers the divine doctrine to those present ; then hears the petitions of all, and performs some cures. Finally he settles the controversies of litigants. At sunset he begins again to converse with God.

But whilst he is employed in these matters, he neglects not the care of the churches ;—now fighting against the impiety of the [heathen] Gentiles ;—now breaking the contumacy of the Jews ;—now routing the troops of the heretics, and sometimes sending letters to the Emperor concerning them ; sometimes exciting governors to divine zeal, sometimes admonishing also the pastors of the churches to attend more diligently to the care of their flocks.

These things I have written, that the shower might be known by a few specimen drops. Others may write many more, and probably will. Should the saint's life be preserved, he may do greater miracles than heretofore. May he long continue in his good works ; for he is an ornament and glory of religion. Thus ends the narrative of Theodoret.

We add some particulars from the Ecclesiastical Histories of Evagrius and Nicephorus, written after the death of the great Pillar-Saint.

Nicephorus says (L. xiv. c. li.) that Symeon's pillar was an abode of only two cubits or three feet and a half in circumference, which is scarcely credible.\*

Evagrius (L. i. c. xiii.) and Nicephorus after him, relate that he spent fifty-six years in his ascetic life, of which thirty-seven years were spent on his pillars low and high ; thirty years, they say, on the high pillar.

The fathers who lived on the mountain tops were well disposed towards him ; but after he adopted the pillar scheme, they sent some of their number to make trial of his monastic virtue. His obedience was to be the test. The delegation were to require him, in the name of the brotherhood, to come down from his pillar ; if he promptly obeyed, then they were to conclude that his pillar scheme was of God, and let him alone. But if he refused or delayed, then they were to take him by the feet and drag him down. When the delegation came within earshot, they called

\* The Greek is, *ενδιαιτημα διπηχυν το ὄλον περιμετρον*. We suspect that the last word should be *διαμετρον*, diameter, instead of circumference.

out and said to him :—What means this unusual and strange sort of habitation ? Why do you leave the trodden path of the saints and take an unknown way of your own ? Come down and follow the footsteps of the elect fathers. The words were scarcely out of their mouths, before he put forward one foot to descend without hesitation or delay. He thanked them also for taking such care, to see that he did nothing contrary to the will of God. Then they permitted him to pursue his own course, and encouraged him to persevere in it, as the way which God had chosen for him.\*

When the Emperor Theodosius ordered the synagogues, which had been taken away from the Jews, to be restored to them by the Christians, the mighty saint of the pillar was indignant at this act of imperial justice, and wrote to the Emperor a letter of remonstrance and reproof ; on the receipt of which his majesty succumbed at once to the omnipotent man of God, revoked his order, and dismissed the governor of the city, by whose advice he had issued it. He also sent an humble petition to the aerial martyr, begging an interest in his prayers.\*

The affair just mentioned, may serve as a specimen of the part which the lofty saint took in the affairs of the Church. Besides the verbal answers that he gave to those who came to him for advice, he on divers occasions dictated letters to emperors, governors, bishops, and other important individuals, giving advice in answer to their inquiries, or admonishing them of their duty.

On one occasion, he sent a letter to Archbishop Basil, concerning the fourth council of Chalcedon, by which Eutychus had been condemned. He also wrote to the Emperor Leo on the same subject, in answer to a circular letter of the emperor addressed to the bishops and to the great saint of the pillar. He thus speaks of that council to the emperor :

“ I, poor and weak, and an abortive monk, present my opinion to his majesty concerning the faith of the six hundred and thirty-six fathers who assembled at Chalcedon, in which (faith) I stand,

\* Evag. L. i. c. 13. Niceph. L. xiv. c. 1.

and by which I am confirmed, seeing that it proceeded from the Holy Spirit. For if, when even two or three are collected in his name, the Saviour is in the midst of them, how could he be present with so many and such holy fathers, unless the Holy Spirit had been with them ?\*

As Symeon was wholly illiterate, and from his habits incapable of judging for himself, about the public affairs and theological disputes of the Church, it is reasonable to believe that he was, in regard to these matters, the mere tool of the bishops who flattered his saintship, and made use of his unbounded credit with the multitude, to promote their own views and purposes in regard to ecclesiastical affairs.

When this extraordinary saint died, all the neighboring cities contended for the possession of his body, a treasure far more valuable in their eyes than gold and jewels. The Antiochians got hold of it first, and conducted it in great pomp, and under a strong guard of soldiers, to their city. The Emperor Leo afterwards demanded it for himself; but the Antiochians sent supplicants to the foot of the throne, who, among other arguments, alleged that—"as our walls have been prostrated by the earthquake, we have brought hither the all-holy body of St. Symeon, to be our wall and bulwark." Leo yielded with reluctance to this argument; but he did yield, and the body continued with the happy Antiochians; but it failed to protect the city against a subsequent invasion of Chosroes, king of Persia.

They who have seen it, (says Nicephorus,†) tell us the wonderful fact, that the body retains its hair and skin, and whole form, as if it were alive,‡ and all the teeth are there except those which the faithful have taken out as precious relics. His iron band lies buried beside the body—that band which he loved so well.

\* Niceph. B. lxx. c. 19.

† Niceph. xiv. c. 51.

‡ It is not very uncommon for unburied bodies to continue long with little change.

Around his pillar, which he called Mundra, on the mountain, an elegant church was built, and innumerable pilgrims resorted to the place. Both Evagrius and Nicephorus mention a miraculous phenomenon which appeared here. The church had an open court, in the centre where the pillar stood. On one side there was an opening in the wall, through which a person standing outside could see the pillar. On days in which the saint's annual festival was celebrated, a person on the outside looking through this opening, could see a great star shining from the pillar ; and what was more remarkable, many affirmed that they had seen the face of St. Symeon himself, flitting about the pillar, with its long beard and a tiara on the head. Women were not permitted to enter the church, but they had the satisfaction to see these miraculous sights from the outside, as well as the men. Evagrius the historian affirms that he saw the star with his own eyes. We believe him ; and had he professed to have seen also the face, with its long beard and crowned head, flitting about the pillar, we should still have believed him ; for the church had been evidently contrived with the view of exhibiting such things to a superstitious people. Perhaps, however, the face and its appurtenances were the product of the imagination only ; for it was seen by some only of those who saw the great star. Here we conclude the wonderful history of St. Symeon Stylites—a saint of original genius and stupendous power of endurance ; and who united in himself, to an unparalleled degree, the austerity of a fanatical devotee, and the hypocrisy of a roguish impostor. He that can believe in the forty days' abstinence, and other superhuman exploits of this saint, must first believe in the infallibility of the fathers of the fifth century, and in the Divine origin of monkery, not only of Christian monkery, but of Hindoo monkery and Boodhist monkery.

#### *Of other Pillar-Saints.*

The scheme of pillar-saintship was adopted by very few. Most historians infer from this fact, that it was not generally ap-

proved. In the first instance, however, when the great Symeon adopted it, nothing in the department of saintship gained more admiration. The true reason, we think, why so few ever adopted the system was, that the successors of Symeon came so far short of their great model, as to make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the multitude. They were like boys attempting to bend the bow of Ulysses. Who, like Symeon, could fast forty days and forty nights, standing erect all the while on the bare top of a pillar seventy feet high? Who like him could live upon half a meal of bread and water per week; and with ulcerous feet, gaunt belly, squeezed by a heavy iron girdle, and beard a yard long, could, in sight of the multitude, bow his head to his feet innumerable times every day? When others made their puny attempts at pillar-saintship, the multitude, thinking of these glorious deeds, despised and neglected their inferior performances. Since neither fame nor power could be obtained this way, the monastic saints betook themselves to the older and easier ways of exercise, in which they suffered less by comparison with an unapproachable model.

The historians mention several other Stylites, one or two of whom we shall notice, because they acquired considerable reputation in this difficult line of saintship.

*Daniel Stylites.*

(Niceph. L. xv. ch. 21, 22.)

A great fire broke out in Constantinople and raged till the fourth day. Every effort to stop it was in vain. From the water-side it spread to the middle of the city, and burned up the buildings for the space of fourteen furlongs in length and five in breadth.

At this time lived in Constantinople the renowned saint Marci-anus; distinguished for the new churches that he built, and for other acts of philanthropy. He attained to such a pitch of virtue, that he even raised the dead. When the fire reached the church of the Resurrection, which he had built, he put a stop to its pro-

gress. Taking the Holy Gospel in his hand, he mounted upon the roof and implored God with prayers and tears. When the fire approached, it revered him as a holy man; it shot upwards and bent round so as to leave the temple untouched.

At this time lived Daniel, who at the Ferry had long kept his station on the top of a pillar. He was a disciple of Symeon, who aided him with his prayers and exhortations to war an excellent warfare; bearing the winter's wind, unprotected; by which he won the victor's prize of a good wrestler,—receiving the gift of casting out demons and of healing the sick. The Emperor often visited him, dressed as a poor man, and being struck with admiration, sought his blessing and an interest in his prayers. He also built a magnificent church and monastery near the pillar, which he raised for the saint to a greater height.

In the time of the fire, Daniel descended from his pillar, and came into the burning city. Wheresoever he came, the fire was immediately quenched by his presence.

In the time of Basiliscus, a distinguished priest who fell from the true religion (says Nicephorus) in taking part with Eutyclus against the council of Chalcedon, the zeal of Daniel caused him again to descend from his pillar. He collected the monks and went with Acacius, bishop of Constantinople, to the heretic, and spoke boldly against him to the emperor.

Symeon Stylites also took up arms against this Basiliscus, who was unable to withstand the mighty influence of two such saints. One of them would have been sufficient to crush him.

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*Symeon Stylites the Second, of the Wonderful Mountain.*

(Evang. L. vi. ch. 23. Niceph. L. xviii. ch. 24.)

This Symeon at an early age excelled all men in virtue, seeing that from his earliest youth he adopted the pillar mode of life. He is said to have shed his first teeth on a pillar. He is said to have mounted on an occasion of this sort. When he was a small boy, his father sent him with a guide to a pillar-saint to receive in-

struction. One day as he went sporting and leaping up the mountain on his way to the teacher, he met with a panther, which he caught, and putting his belt round the beast's neck, he led him to his teacher; and being asked by him what it was, he said that it was a cat. From this circumstance his teacher judged that he was to be a great saint, and took him as a partner upon his pillar.

Here first, and afterwards upon another mountain, he lived to the age of sixty-eight years. God gave him boundless gifts:—enabling him to chase away the demons, to heal the sick upon the spot by prayer and the laying on of his hand, and to see alike the present and the future.

A certain boy had been, by the forgetfulness of his companions, left alone in the woods. A lion in Symeon's service found him, and laying him on his back, carried him to the saint, with whom he was found by the servants sent in search of him.

Symeon did innumerable other miracles, which were still talked of when Evagrius wrote. Men flocked to him from all parts and got the benefits which they sought. The branches of the trees that grew on the mountains afforded him nourishment, which he preferred to all meats and drinks. His mountain is, from him and his miracles, called *The Wonderful Mountain*.

Though few practised the pillar scheme of saintship, yet now and then one or a few, in divers times and countries, tried their hand at gaining popular admiration in this way.

But one instance of the kind is recorded to have happened in western Europe; that was in the year 591, when one Vullilaio, a monk of Lombardy, had a pillar erected for him at Treves, on the Rhine, and stood upon it bareheaded through summer's heat and winter's cold. His sufferings were so severe that the bishop ordered him to come down and live like other monks, telling him that the severity of the climate would not permit him to imitate the great Symeon of Antioch. He obeyed his superiors, but with tears and reluctance.\*

\* Jortin's Remarks, A. D. 591. Fleury's Eccl. Hist. viii. 54.



In the year 802, there were still found a few pillar-monks in the East; but after this period they seem to have become extinct, as no further notice is found of them in the records of after ages.\*

\* Fleury, x. 52, 54.

## CHAPTER XXV.

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DIVERS SAINTS AND MIRACLES OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.

### *Barsanuphius.*

(From Evagrius, L. iv. c. 33 ; and Nicephorus, L. xvii. c. 22.)

IN the reign of Justinian, flourished many religious miracle-working men ; among the rest Barsanuphius, an Egyptian, who in the flesh lived a fleshless life, in a cell near Gaza. After he had wrought many miracles, he shut himself up in his cell, where he is believed to have lived more than fifty years without food or drink. When the report of these things reached Eustochius, bishop of Jerusalem, (or, as Nicephorus calls him, Sallustius,) he believed it not, and commanded men to dig through the wall of the cell ; *but such a fire broke out, that the workmen fled, to avoid being burnt to death.*

### *Symeon of Emesa, the Fool for Christ's sake.*

This man led a new and singular sort of life. Being a man of wisdom and refined manners, he purposely acted like a fool, and thus cast away all earthly glory as a shameful thing.

This holy man lived long by himself, so concealed that no one could discover when or how he prayed to God, when or what he ate. When he appeared in public, as he frequently did, he

seemed to be out of his wits: he said or did nothing that denoted sense, skill or sagacity. Sometimes he would pop into a tavern, and gobble up whatever meats he found, as if he were famished. If any one, understanding his true character, showed him respect, he indignantly left the place, to avoid a discovery of his sense and his virtue, which he wished to conceal. So he behaved in public; but he had a few intimate friends, with whom he would occasionally lay aside his assumed character of fool, and converse with his natural good sense.

One of these friends had a maid who was debauched by some man; and when the time of her delivery drew near, she was compelled by her master and mistress to declare the name of the seducer. She falsely accused Symeon of having privily lain with her, and of being the father of the child. She even swore to the truth of her statement; and said that she would, if required, say the same before his face.

When this was reported to Symeon, he did not deny the charge, but said that he carried with him a carnal nature, like other men, and was naturally prone to sin. But after he became, on this account, the common talk of the neighborhood, he seemed as though he was ashamed of himself; and in order to carry on the deception, hid himself, under the pretence of conscious guilt. But now came the girl's day of parturition. She was set upon the usual stole of childbirth, and was racked with intolerable pangs. The wretched woman came to the crisis of her fate. After a long agony, she was not delivered; and Symeon came to visit her in what seemed to be her last hours. The women in attendance asked him to pray for her. He then declared explicitly that her infant would never see the sun, unless she revealed the name of its true father. When at last she did so, the child was born immediately; truth having in this case performed the office of midwife.\*

\* So it seems that in this age of wonders, a saint could become a miracle-worker by renouncing his good name, and pretending to be a fool and a profligate.

At another time, also, Symeon entered the house of a harlot; and having shut the door, continued for some time alone with her. Then he opened the door, slipped out and ran, as if he desired to elude observation. Thus he gave occasion for others to speak ill of him. Then some of those who had seen him, suspecting that his conduct was not so bad as it appeared to be, went to the woman, and inquired of her the object of his visit, and his long stay with her. She solemnly affirmed, that for nearly three days she had been in want of food; and that Symeon being aware of this fact, had brought some food and a little wine;—that when the door was shut, he had spread the food on the table, and bade her eat; and that when she had eaten until she was satisfied, he gathered up the remains and took his departure.

When the great earthquake was about to occur, by which the cities of Berytus, Biblus and Tripolis, were the chief sufferers, Symeon took a leathern thong in his hand, and flogged with it certain of the pillars that surrounded the market-place, saying to each, Stand fast, for you will soon have to dance. Some persons present supposing that the action meant something, noticed what pillars he did not strike; and these were the very pillars which were thrown down by the shock of the earthquake. Many such memorable acts were done by this singular man.\*

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*Thomas the Monk, another Fool for Christ's sake.*

Evagrius, in the chapter next after that in which he relates the case of Symeon, just mentioned, gives the following brief notice of another saint of the same stamp.

There was (says Evagrius) at the same time, one Thomas, in Coele Syria, who followed the same mode of life. He came sometimes to Antioch, to receive an annual stipend of his monastery. This stipend was usually given out of the revenues of the church of Antioch. One day Anastasius, steward of the church of Antioch, being angry with this Thomas for coming so often, gave him a slap on the jaw. Those present being indignant at this,

\* See for this story, Evagrius and Nicephorus, in the chapters last cited.

Thomas merely declared that this was the last time that either he should receive, or Anastasius should distribute, the stipend. So it came to pass; for both of them died on the same day.

The body of Thomas was put into the sepulchre for strangers. This was a pit into which bodies were thrown, one upon another. But the sacred body of Thomas would not lie under another that was less sacred; for as fast as other bodies were cast in, that of the saint would still work itself up to the top: God having endued it with the miraculous power of casting beneath it the vulgar carcases that fell upon it.

The inhabitants who had admired the holy man, observed this, and told Ephraim, the Syrian, of the fact. Then the body was carried to Antioch, and buried with the honors of saintship. By this translation of the holy relics, a pestilence then raging at Antioch, was driven away.

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*Euthemius, a Mighty Saint.*

(From Nicephorus, L. xiv. ch. 2.)

In the time of Symeon Stylites, flourished the renowned Euthemius in Palestine. He was born by promise\* under the emperor Valens, and was taught by the great Otreius Acacius. He was then made a priest, and afterwards came into Palestine with the admirable Theoctistus. He fixed his work-shop of virtue in a certain cave. Adding cell to cell he soon built up a great monastery. He rose to such a pitch of virtue, that he became the rule and standard of monachism. He gained great fame by his miracles; for he healed and converted the son of a Persian military officer, and by his prayers he made barren land produce good crops, and barren women produce children. He made a little bread suffice to feed 400 men.

When he performed the sacred mysteries, a heavenly light like a pillar shone around him, a voice came forth proclaiming what a pure man he was. It is also related of him, that when a certain

\* That is, some monk promised him to his barren mother.

monk died, who was falsely reputed to be chaste and virtuous, he saw a fierce demon pulling the soul out of his body with a three-pronged hook, and heard a heavenly voice proclaiming his crimes. But when a ragged beggar was dying on the bare ground, he saw a company of angels standing by, and reverently calling forth his soul.

He knew by revelation, what was in the minds of those who came to receive the communion.

He removed to the Lord at the age of ninety-seven, in the reign of the emperor Leo. His life was simple, his complexion fair, and his dense beard reached to his thighs.

NOTE.—To give a more complete view of the current superstitions of the age, we shall give, from Evagrius and Nicephorus, some miraculous stories which have no particular relation to monachism; but they are useful to show the character of the times in which monachism first prevailed generally among Christians.

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*Of a Miracle wrought at Apamea\* by the wood of the Cross.*

(Evag. L. iv. ch. 26.)

[NOTE.—In the preceding chapter the author relates how the Persian king had taken and destroyed Antioch.]

When the Apameans heard of the burning of Antioch by Chosroes, king of Persia, they petitioned their bishop Thomas, that he would bring forth at an unusual season the salutary and life-giving wood of the true cross,† and exhibit it to all eyes, that

There were several cities of this name. The one here meant was up the river Orontes, at the mouth of which stood Antioch.

† Helena, the superstitiously pious mother of Constantine the Great, found by digging at Jerusalem, what she supposed to be the true cross on which the Saviour was crucified. A miracle proved its genuineness, say the historians. That sacred wood was afterwards revered as divine. It was also miraculously multiplied. Pieces of it—ultimately enough to load a ship—were distributed;—yet the true cross remained whole and entire.

they might see and kiss this only salvation of mortals, and that it might be their *viaticum*\* to another life.

Thomas granted their petition, and brought forth the life-giving wood; certain days being appointed during which it should be exhibited, that all the neighboring people might share the blessing of salvation. My parents took me—then a boy at school—along with them. At the time when we were favored with the privilege of adoring and kissing the venerable cross, Thomas with uplifted hands presented the wood of the cross which abolished the old curse, walking round the whole sacred edifice, as on the solemn days of worship used to be done. As he walked, a great flame, shining but not burning, followed him, so that the whole space in which he walked, seemed to be in flames. This was done many times when the bishop walked round the place. This miraculous sign denoted safety to the Apameans. A painting representing the miracle, was put into the church as a memorial of it.

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*Of a Miracle wrought at Sergiopolis.*

(Evang. L. iv. ch. 28.)

Chosrhoes had begun to batter the walls Sergiopolis with a ram, when the citizens begged for terms. It was agreed that they should deliver up the sacred vessels of the church, for the redemption of the city. Among them was a cross, which Justinian and Theodorus had sent them. When they were brought, Chosrhoes asked the priest and the Persian, who were charged with the delivery of them, if these were all. Then some who were accustomed to lie, said that the citizens who were few, had hidden some of their treasures. Of the sacred vessels of gold and silver, none had been left but a *silver chest* containing the sacred relics of the *invincible* martyr Servius. Chosrhoes therefore brought up his

\* Viaticum, provision for a journey, is the name that was usually given to the sacrament administered to the dying. The Apameans fearing the fate of the Antiochians, expected the *wood* to send them straight to heaven.

army to renew the attack; when suddenly there appeared upon the walls an innumerable army of defenders in full armor.

Chosrhoes, knowing that the able-bodied citizens had been taken away, and few left except old men and children, understood that *this was a miracle wrought by the martyr*. He therefore retreated to his kingdom, and *it is said* was baptized before his death.

*Note on the foregoing.*

Here we have a specimen of the morality associated with the current superstition about miracle-working saints and saints' relics. The citizens attempt to commit a fraud on the Persian king, by retaining a silver chest which they were bound by covenant to deliver up. But as the chest contained the relics of an *invincible saint*, they trusted in the saint to sustain them in their perfidy. The invincible saint, according to a church historian of the time, does sustain them by a stupendous miracle. The Father who tells the story, admires the whole affair as glorious for the saint.

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*St. Euphemia's Blood.*

(Niceph. L. xv.)

The fourth council of Chalcedon\* assembled in St. Euphemia's Church, built on a pleasant declivity, two furlongs from the Bosphorus. The martyr's body was kept in a certain apartment of the extensive church. On the left side of the room was a wonderful casement, closed by a shutter, through which an iron bar projected, with a sponge tied to the inner end of it. This sponge they rolled in the martyr's sacred relics, and drew it back by the iron handle, filled with her blood. Whenever the people saw this, they raised their hands and shouted at the miracle. So copiously

\* The city of Chalcedon stood on the shore of the Bosphorus, nearly opposite to Constantinople.



did this sponge supply the sacred liquor, that emperors, and bishops, and people that assembled there, could all use it, and also take some of it away with them. This divine blood never failed nor changed color. When a good bishop ruled, the supply was abundant, but when one of a different character was in the chair, the martyr gave forth her blood more sparingly. This I know to be a fact, that it flows daily at all times and for all people, both believers and unbelievers alike. I know also, that if one enters the sacred apartment where the coffin and sacred relics are deposited, a boundless supernatural odor, exceeding all that art can make, presents itself. It far exceeds all that the various flowers of a meadow can produce, and differs from all other sweet smells.

Here met the Council that tried Eutyches and Dioscorus for holding that Christ had but one nature.

After they had debated the matter, the Council resolved to refer the decision to St. Euphemia, in whose church they were met. This martyr had suffered under the Emperor Diocletian. She was first torn by torturing implements, and then thrown to wild beasts; yet her body had been preserved *whole and incorrupt* by the Chalcedonians, of whose city she was.

The orthodox of the Council, and the Eutychian party, each drew up a formulary of their faith. Each document was inclosed in an envelope, sealed up, and laid at the martyr's feet. After spending a night in prayer, they came next day, and lifting the cover of the coffin, they found the orthodox document closely grasped in the martyr's hands, but the other cast contemptuously at her feet as a vile thing.

The heretic was not convinced, however, by this miracle,\* therefore the majority made out a formal sentence of condemnation against him.

In a subsequent book, (xviii. c. 31,) Nicéphorus says, that the Emperor Maurice took an idle fancy that the miracles wrought by

\* The heretic was, we presume, of our opinion, that the martyr was sure to decide in favor of that party which had possession of her relics.

St. Euphemia's body were artificial, and that he would determine the matter by actual experiment. Her relics were deposited in a marble coffin, and as before said, on the anniversary day of her passion, the bishop of the place drew blood from her body, in the sight of all, with a sponge. The blood appeared to be fresh, mixed with the gore of the wounds, and with an oil generated of itself. Maurice doubting foolishly of this, when the time of the miracle approached, sealed up the coffin. When the time came he closely watched the proceedings, and behold! as before, a stream of fragrant blood and oil poured forth from the monument, and filled the sponge; the martyr having, on this occasion, made it pour forth more copiously than before. The emperor was convinced, and putting his finger into the sacred liquor, sanctified himself by sprinkling it upon him.

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*Of the Oil Fountain at Heraclea, Perinthe.*

(Niceph. lib. xviii., ch. 32.)

A man named Paulinus, devoted to magical arts, used a silver basin in his practices. This basin he was necessitated by poverty to sell. A silversmith bought it, and offered it again for sale. Perinthius, Bishop of Byzantium, bought it, without knowing to what use it had been applied.

Now the dead body of St. Glyceria was wont to shed a constant stream of oil, which was caught in a brass basin. The bishop intending to honor the saint, took away the brass basin and substituted the silver one. But the holy martyr detesting the profane vessel withheld the stream of oil. When several days had passed, and none of the wonderful liquid came, the bishop wept, and prayed God to reveal the cause; which he did to the bishop in a dream. Immediately the brass basin was restored to its place, and the supernatural oil fountain began to flow again. This led the emperor to search out the magicians, many of whom, and among the rest this same Paulinus, were discovered and put to death.

*The Miracle of the Jewish Boy.*

(Niceph. lib. xvii. ch. 25.)

When Monas was ordained Bishop of Constantinople, in place of Anthemius, a remarkable miracle occurred.

It had long been the custom in the imperial city, when any of the sacrament of the body of the Lord God, our Saviour Christ, was left, for the priests to call uncorrupted boys from the schools, who should eat those remnants, fasting. This often happened to myself, when I was a small boy.

On this occasion, among the boys called, was the son of a Jew, who was a glassmaker. The boy having stayed out later than usual, excused himself to his parents, by relating that he had eaten of the Divine remnants in the Church. The father was furiously enraged, and opening his glass furnace, cast his son into the flaming fire, and there shut him in.

The mother missing the boy, sought him everywhere in vain; and on the third day, came into the glass-house, mourning, and wailing, and calling for her son. He heard and answered her out of the furnace. Then the mother broke open the furnace door, and saw her son standing in the middle of the intensely hot fire, with not even a hair of his head singed. On her inquiring how he had escaped, he said, that an elegant woman, (St. Mary,) dressed in a purple robe, came often to him, poured water on the fire around him, so as to keep off the flame; and fed him when he was hungry.

When this came to the ears of the Emperor Justinian, he had the mother and son washed in the Divine laver of regeneration, (that is, baptized;) but he crucified the father as a parricide.\*

\* What exalted ideas must this miracle have given of the supernatural efficacy of the sacramental bread, and of the beneficent guardianship of St. Mary, called by the Evangelists "the mother of Jesus!" But the doctrine of transubstantiation was not yet invented.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

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### SPECIMENS OF MONASTIC ROMANCE.

From the Golden Legend of James De Voraggio, Archbishop of Genoa in the 13th Century.

#### *Preliminary Notice.*

OF all the books written in the Middle Ages, the Golden Legend was for several centuries the most popular. It is a collection of the Lives of the Saints, compiled from scattered records of preceding ages, professing to contain facts, and intended to be read by the faithful as a true history of ancient saints. Whether or not the most reverend author added anything of his own invention, to what he found in the records which he consulted, we are unable to determine; but certain it is, that his Golden Legend passed current, for ages, in the Church, as a veritable narrative of the wonderful doings and sufferings of the holy men and women of former times.

The author, James of Voraggio, was an Italian, born at Voraggio, in the territory of Genoa, in the year 1230, or about that time. He became a Dominican friar at an early age, and led a most self-denying and holy life. He was distinguished for his learning, his pious zeal, his humility, and his charity. Such was his reputation for sanctity and learning, that he was first made a Provincial, or superintendent, of his order; and was then, much against the grain of his humility, almost forced to accept the

archbishopric of Genoa. Therefore this author of the Golden Legend was no obscure chronicler, writing for bread or for reputation; no unlearned scribbler or ignorant enthusiast; no idle romancer, seeking to amuse the public with wonderful tales;—but a grave dignitary of the Church, full of monastic holiness, writing for the advancement of religion among the people of his age. Yet see what the learned Dupin, author of a most useful history of the Church, and himself a Roman Catholic, says of him. “He is author of the Golden Legend, which contains the lives of the saints, where he has amassed together, without judgment or discretion, a heap of stories for the most part fabulous. Yet it sold mightily, and was one of the books most often printed in the fifteenth century”—that is, immediately after the art of printing was invented; which shows that it was then, as it had been before, one of the most popular books in the Church.

These same stories of the saints had been long current in the Church, before James De Voraggio’s time; and their credit was sustained, as their fictitious miracles had been invented or propagated, by monks of all orders, and clergymen of all ranks, from the simple priest upwards to his holiness, the Pope. When we compare the stories of the Golden Legend with those of the early Fathers of the Church, concerning the same saints,—as St. Antony, and St. Paul the Hermit,—we find that the author of the Legend has, in general, given a correct account of what he read in Athanasius, Jerome, and other ancient Fathers. But then he has added, from later authorities, the most extravagant stories of other saints who did once exist, and of saints who never existed,—such, for example, as St. Christopher,—and swallowing all with the same credulity, he belched them forth together, to be swallowed by the people;—and swallowed they were indiscriminately, while mother Church looked on and said, Well done!

The reader will agree with us, that the stories which we have selected as specimens of the Golden Legend, are mainly fabulous: the learned in Church history will say further, that they are wholly fabulous, and that no such persons as St. Christopher and the

Seven Sleepers ever existed. They are selected, partly because they are amusing fables, and partly because they were famous in their day, and are often alluded to in our own times.

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NOTE.—Having no copy of the original Latin, which has become exceedingly rare, we translate from a modern French version, that will serve our purpose just as well.

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*The Legend of St. Christopher.*

Christopher was of the land of Canaan ; he was exceedingly tall, being twelve cubits high, and had a terrible aspect. We read in a history of his life, that whilst he was near to a king of the land of Canaan, he took it into his head that he would go and serve the greatest king in all the world ; and he went to a certain king, who was reported to have no superior on the earth. This king, when he saw him, received him with joy, and made him stay in his court.

One day a minstrel came to sing before the king. The song which he sung, made frequent mention of the Devil. Now the king was a Christian ; and every time that he heard the Devil's name, he made on his person the sign of the cross. Christopher was greatly astonished when he saw this, and asked the king why he did so. The king was unwilling to tell him. Christopher said, "If you don't answer my question, I wont stay with you any longer." Then the king, being obliged to answer, said, "Every time I hear the Devil's name, I fortify myself with the sign of the cross, for fear that he will subject me to his power, and do me some hurt." Christopher replied, "If you are afraid of the Devil, and think that he can hurt you,—that proves that he is mightier than you are. I am deceived in my purpose,—thinking that I had found the mightiest king in all the world : but I will go and find that Devil, that I may engage in his service, and acknowledge him for my master." So he took his leave of the king, and set off in quest of the Devil

It came to pass, as he was crossing a desert, that he saw a great multitude of soldiers, and marching at their head a man of frightful appearance, who asked him whither he was going. Christopher made answer, "I am seeking the Devil, that I may acknowledge him for my master." The man replied, "I am the one that you seek." Then Christopher was glad, and engaged himself to his service for life, and acknowledged him for his master. Then setting forward together, they came to a cross road, where a cross had been set up. No sooner did the Devil see this, than he took to his heels and ran away round over a rough country, before he returned to the main road. Christopher, who had followed him, was very much surprised, and demanded to know why he had left the direct road. Then the Devil being unwilling to answer, Christopher said, "If you don't tell me what I want to know, I shall quit you straightway." Then the Devil said to him, "It was on that cross that Jesus Christ died; and whenever I see it, I am seized with fright and run away." And Christopher answered, "That Jesus Christ, whose cross puts you in such a fright, is then mightier than you. I have therefore labored in vain, so far; and I have not yet found the mightiest prince in all the world. I shall now quit you, and go in search of Jesus Christ."

And after he had, for a long time, sought for some one who might direct him to Jesus Christ, he at last found a hermit, who diligently instructed him in the faith. And the hermit said to him, "That king whose service you are now seeking, will oblige you to fast very often." Christopher replied, "Then let him command something else, for that is what I will not do." And the hermit added, "He will also require you frequently to pray." And Christopher replied, "I don't know what you mean by that, and I will not be subject to any such services." And the hermit said, "Do you not know that river, where many of those perish who attempt to cross it?" And Christopher said, "Yes, I know it." And the hermit said, "Well, as you are very tall and strong, if you will keep near the bank of that river, and carry the

travellers over it, you will do a thing very agreeable to Jesus Christ, whom you desire to serve; and I hope that he will make himself known to you." And Christopher answered, "Ah, that is a service that I can willingly engage in, and I promise you that I will do what you tell me there." So he went to the river, and built himself a lodge: and he betook himself to carrying over readily every traveller that came, using a staff to support himself in the water. And so, after many days had passed away, while he was resting himself in his lodge, he heard a voice like that of a child, which called him and said, "Christopher, come and carry me over." Christopher went out, but found nobody there. When he had returned into his lodge, the same thing happened a second time. But the third time, when he went out, he found, at the water's edge, a child that begged Christopher to carry him over the river. Then Christopher, putting the child upon his shoulder, and taking his staff, entered the water. And the water rose by little and little, and the child pressed upon his shoulder in a most extraordinary manner, and continued to grow heavier and heavier, so that Christopher began to be afraid. When at last he had gotten over the river, and had set down the child upon the bank, he said, "You put me in great peril, my child, and loaded me with such a weight, that I seemed to have the whole world upon my shoulders. I never had such a huge load before." And the child answered, "Do not wonder at that, Christopher; for not only had you the whole world upon your shoulders, but him also who created the world; for I am Jesus Christ, the one for whom you have performed the task that you undertook; and that you may have an evidence of the truth of what I tell you, plant your staff in the sand, and to-morrow you will see it covered with leaves and flowers." Then he disappeared immediately. Christopher stuck his staff in the sand, and the next day he saw it flowering like a palm tree, and covered with dates.

Afterwards he came to Samos, a city of Lycia,\* and as he did not speak the language, he prayed God for the gift of speaking

\* The only Samos was an island and city on the coast of Lydia, not Lycia.



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it ; and whilst he was at prayer, the judges of the place, taking him for a fool, let him go. Then Christopher came to the place where they were torturing the Christians, and he exhorted the sufferers to have courage. And one of the judges gave him a blow. Christopher said, "If I were not a Christian, I would punish you on the spot for that outrage." Then he stuck his staff into the ground, and prayed God that it might blossom, for the conversion of the people. It did so straightway : and by the sight of this, eight thousand men were converted. And the king sent two hundred soldiers, with orders to fetch Christopher to him. The soldiers having found him at prayer, were afraid to lay hold on him. Then the king sent again the same number. These having also found him at prayer, they prayed with him. When Christopher rose from his knees, he asked, "Whom do you seek?" And they answered, "The king hath sent us to carry you to him, bound." And Christopher replied, "Unless I pleased, you could never master me." And they said, "If you do not please to come, then go freely wheresoever you choose, and we will say that we could not find you." "No, (said Christopher), I will go with you." And he converted them to the faith, and then told them to tie his hands behind his back, and so he made them lead him to the king. When the king saw him, he was frightened, and tumbled from his throne. His slaves lifted him up again, and he asked Christopher his name and country. The saint answered, "Before I was baptized, they called me Reprobate ; now my name is Christopher." The king answered, "You gave yourself a silly name, when you took the name of Christ, who was crucified, and could do nothing either for himself or for you. Wicked Canaanite, why do you not sacrifice to our Gods?" And Christopher answered, "It is with reason that they call you Dagnus. You are the death of the world and the companion of the Devil. Your Gods are the work of men's hands." The king rejoined, "You were nourished among savage beasts, and you can speak of nothing but things unheard of by the ears of men. If you will sacrifice, you may expect of me great honors ; if not, you have nothing

but punishments to expect." And when the saint refused, he had him put in prison, and caused the soldiers to be beheaded, who had been sent to arrest Christopher. He then had two beautiful girls shut up in the same prison; the one was called Nicé, the other Aquilina; promising them great rewards if they enticed Christopher to sin. When the saint saw them, he betook himself to prayer immediately. And when they came to cajole and caress him, he said to them, "What do you want? Why have you been brought in here?" They were frightened at the brightness of his face, and said, "Have pity on us, servant of God, and we will believe in the God whom you preach." When the king heard of this, he sent for them, and said, "You have been seduced; but I swear that if you do not sacrifice to the Gods, you shall be tortured to death." They answered, "If you will have us to sacrifice, then order the whole people to assemble in the temple." When this was done, they put their sashes round the necks of the idols, pulled them down to the ground and broke them, and said to the bystanders, "Go and call in physicians to heal your Gods." Then the king had Aquilina tied, and all her bones smashed with a great stone; and when she had rendered up her soul to the Lord, her sister Nicé was cast into a great fire, out of which she came unhurt: then she was beheaded. Then the king ordered Christopher to be beaten with rods, and then a red-hot iron helmet to be pressed upon his head. Next he had Christopher set upon an iron chair, glowing with heat; but the chair melted like wax, and Christopher suffered no heat. Then the king ordered him to be tied to a post, and four hundred soldiers to pierce him with their arrows: but the arrows stopped short in the air, and not one could touch him. But the king believing him to be pierced, began to rail at him. Then instantly one of the arrows turned aside and put out his eye. And Christopher said, "My race is almost finished; to-morrow, tyrant, dilute some clay with my blood, and put it upon your eye, and you will recover the use of it." Then the king ordered his head to be cut off, which was done. And having taken some of Christo-

pher's blood, and diluted some clay with it, he put it upon his eye, and it was healed upon the spot. Then the king believed, and ordered that those who blasphemed God or Saint Christopher, should be punished with death.\*

*The Legend of the Seven Sleepers.*

The Seven Sleepers were born in the city of Ephesus. The emperor Decius, who was persecuting the Christians, having come to Ephesus, ordered temples to be raised in the middle of the city, in order that all the people might offer sacrifice with him. And he ordered all the Christians to be sought out, that no choice might be left them but to worship idols or die. So great did the terror become, that friend disowned his friend, the father his son, and the son his father. Now there were found in the city seven Christians, namely, Maximian, Malchus, Marcion, Dyonisius, John, Serapion, and Constantine,—who refused to sacrifice to idols [at the appointed time] ; but remained in their houses, where they gave themselves to fasting and prayer. They were accused be-

\* This story of the imaginary St. Christopher, was evidently compiled from two different and inconsistent stories. The first part, which shows some genius for romancing, makes him a giant eighteen feet high, who carries passengers over a deep river upon his shoulders. But no sooner does this enormous giant, compared with whom Goliath was an ordinary man, get to Lycia, than he dwindles down to the common stature ; girls are sent to tempt him, and a common helmet is put on his head.

Both the original tales, the offspring of ignorant imposture in a dark age, assume that kings reigned in Palestine and Lycia, when the early Christians were persecuted by heathen rulers ; though everybody, the least informed on the history of those times, is aware that Palestine and Lycia belonged to the Roman empire, and that Palestine no longer bore the name of Canaan.

But notwithstanding all these absurdities, and the utter absence of any authentic record to prove that such a person as St. Christopher ever existed, he is one of the deified Saints of the Roman Catholic calendar ; a festival is held to his honor on the 25th of July, when the faithful pray to him ; huge statues of him, to represent his giantship, were *certainly*, and *perhaps* still are, placed in the porticoes of cathedrals, for the worship of the people ; and the saint himself—not the statue—did once, possibly many times, appear in person to his devout worshippers. So much for St. Christoohar, the giant.

fore Decius, and in his presence confessed that they were Christians. The emperor granted them a certain time to consider what they would do. But they profited by this interval to distribute their goods among the poor, and to retire to mount Celion, where they resolved to hide themselves. When one of them returned to the city to procure necessities for them, he disguised himself as a physician. Decius having returned to Ephesus, from which he had been absent for some time, he gave orders that they should be sought for, and forced to offer sacrifice. Malchus, who was then in the city, was so alarmed that he fled to his companions and informed them of the emperor's wrath. They were all greatly frightened, but Malchus presented them with the loaves that he had brought, in order that he might by this supply of nourishment, fortify their courage for the combat. After they had eaten, and whilst they sat weeping and conversing sorrowfully, they all fell asleep by the will of God.

The pagans sought for them without being able to find them, and Decius was exceedingly irritated, when he saw that they had escaped him. He sent for their parents, and threatened to put them to death, if they did not reveal what they knew of them. The parents said that they had distributed their goods among the poor, but what had afterwards become of them they did not know. Decius, thinking that they had taken refuge in a large cavern, had the entrance walled up with great stones, that they might miserably perish of hunger.

A long time afterwards, when Decius and all his race was no more, 372 years after, and in the thirtieth year of the reign of the emperor Theodosius, broke forth the heresy of those who denied the resurrection of the dead. The pious emperor Theodosius, afflicted that under his reign the faith should be attacked, had, after some days, retired into the interior of his palace, shedding tears and covered with sackcloth. God willing to comfort him, and to revive the faith, recalled the seven martyrs to life. He inspired an inhabitant of Ephesus with the idea of building on this mountain some stables for his flocks. The workmen having opened the

cavern, the seven sleepers awoke ; and believing that their sleep had endured but a night, they asked Malchus with anxiety, what Decius had decided concerning them. He answered, " The emperor is having us sought for, that he may compel us to offer sacrifice to idols." Then Maximian answered, " God knows that we will never sacrifice." Then exhorting his companions, he told Malchus to go to the city and buy some more bread, and inform himself of what the emperor had done.

Malchus took five-pence and went out of the cavern. When he saw the stones at the mouth, he was surprised. Then going on cautiously to one of the city gates, he was all astonishment to see over it the sign of the cross. He went to another gate and there he saw the same ; and he noticed that the same thing appeared on all the gates. He thought that he must be dreaming. Then he entered the city, rubbing his eyes. When he went to the bakers and heard people speaking of Jesus Christ, he was still more astonished. " How is this ?"—said he—" Yesterday nobody durst pronounce the name of Jesus Christ, and to-day every body speaks boldly of him ! I believe that I am not at Ephesus, but in some other city." But being told on enquiry that he was certainly at Ephesus, he stood confounded. When he entered the shops of the bakers and offered them his money, they looked surprised, and said that the young man must have found an ancient treasure. Malchus observing that they talked with one another, imagined that they were going to lead him to the emperor ; and being greatly alarmed, he told them that if they would let him go, they might keep both the money and the bread. They caught hold of him, and said, " Who are you that have found a treasure of the ancient emperors ? Show it to us, and we will share with you and keep your secret." Malchus was so frightened, that he could not devise an answer. Seeing that he said nothing, they put a rope about his neck, and dragged him along to the middle of the city. The rumor soon spread that a young man had found a treasure : and all the people gathered about him, whilst he endeavored to persuade them that he had

found nothing. Nobody knew him ; and when he cast his eyes around to discover some of his relations, or at least some of his neighbors, whom he supposed to be yet alive, and perceived not a single face that he knew, he stood like a man out of his senses. Saint Martin, bishop of the city, and the governor, Antipater, having heard of the affair, ordered that he should be brought to them without being hurt,—and the bakers likewise. When they were bringing him to the church, he thought that they were taking him before the emperor. The bishop and the governor demanded to know of him where he had found a concealed treasure. He answered that he had found nothing at all, but that those pieces of money were a part of his patrimony. Being asked of what city he was of, he replied, “I am of this city, if so be that this is Ephesus.” The governor said, “Send for your parents to come hither, that they may answer for you.” He named his parents and relations, and as none of them were known, he was considered an impostor : and the governor said, “How can you expect me to believe that this money came from your parents, when it bears date 377 years before our time, and goes back to the commencement of the reign of the emperor Decius, and bears no resemblance to the money of our time ? Think you then to deceive the old men and sages of Ephesus ? I will therefore have you dealt with according to the rigor of the law, until you acknowledge the discovery that you have made.” Then Malchus replied, “I beseech you in the name of the Lord to answer what I shall ask, and I will then answer whatsoever you shall demand.—What has become of the emperor Decius, who was in this city ?” The bishop answered, “My son, there is no more an emperor of that name, and he who bore that name has been dead for a long time.” Malchus replied, “What I hear astonishes me more and more ; and you would not believe what I would say ; but follow me and I will lead you to my companions, who are upon Mount Celion, and you will believe them. We fled yesterday from the tyranny of Decius.” And the bishop said to the governor, “It is a vision which God intends to reveal by the



ministry of this young man." They followed him therefore, with a multitude of the citizens. Malchus entered the cavern first, in order to find his companions, and the bishop followed him, and found among the stones some letters sealed with two silver seals; and they read them to the people. And they saw the martyrs sitting in the cavern, and their faces had the freshness of roses. All fell down and gave glory to God.

The bishop and the governor sent word of this to the emperor Theodosius, and entreated him to come without delay, and see a miracle which was without example. And the emperor, rising from the ashes upon which he was groaning, covered with sackcloth, hastened from Constantinople to Ephesus. All the inhabitants came forth to meet him, and ascended with him to the cavern. And immediately when the saints saw the emperor, their faces shone like the sun. And the emperor rendered thanks to God; and he embraced the martyrs, and said to them, "I see you as if I saw the Saviour raising Lazarus." And Maximian answered him, "Believe in us; for, because of the faith, God hath raised us up before the great resurrection-day, to the end that you might believe firmly in the resurrection of the dead; and as a child is in the womb of its mother, where it lives without suffering, so have we lived in a state of sleep without suffering." And when he had said this, they bowed their heads and rendered their spirits to the Lord. And the emperor arose and bent over them, and embraced them with tears. And when he ordered golden shrines to be made, that they might be put therein, they appeared to him that same night, saying that they had so far rested in the ground, and that he should leave them to rest therein, until the Lord should revive them anew. Then the emperor ordered that the cavern should be adorned with precious stones; and he had all the bishops informed of this wonderful event, to confirm the people in the faith of the resurrection.

They were reported to have slept three hundred and seventy-two years; but that is not certain. For they awoke in the year of the Lord four hundred and forty-eight; and Decius reigned one

year and three months, in the year two hundred and fifty-two : so that they slept but one hundred and eighty-six years.

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*St. Bernard, of Clairvaux.*

To show that monkish sanctity had lost none of its esteem in the Church so late as the twelfth century, we shall give some passages from the Golden Legend of St. Bernard, who lived about eighty years before James of Voraggio, author of the legend. He was a native of Burgundy.

His mother had devoted all her sons, before they were born, to the monastic life, and educated them to that end. She had six sons, of whom Bernard was the third.

“When she was pregnant with him, she dreamed that she had in her womb a white dog with a red back, that barked.” A man of God interpreted this dream to signify, that she should be the mother of an excellent dog, who should guard well the Lord’s house, and bark powerfully against his enemies.”

When quite a youth, being very handsome, his chastity was severely tried on several occasions.

“Reflecting how little safety there was for him in the world, he resolved to fly from it. When his brothers knew this, they did all in their power to hinder him ; but the grace of God strengthened him to such a degree, that he not only accomplished his purpose, but moreover carried with him his brothers and many other persons. In the year 1112, Bernard, being then about twenty-two years old, entered with thirty companions into the order of Citeaux.”

This order of Citeaux had been founded about fifteen years before, on the principles of the severest ascetic austerity.

“When Bernard entered upon a religious life, he delivered himself wholly to contemplation ; and was so absorbed in the service of God, that he appeared to be entirely estranged from his bodily senses. He stayed a whole year in his cell, and at last did not know that the building had a vault. He was often in the chapel, and yet thought that it had but one window on a side,

when it had three. The abbot of Citeaux sent some brethren to build the monastery of Clairvaux, and put Bernard at their head as abbot. They remained there a long time in a state of extreme destitution. They made themselves a sort of bread out of the leaves of trees. But the servant of God watched to a superhuman degree ; he would hardly allow himself to sleep at all, saying that sleep was the image of death, and that if the dead appeared like persons asleep, to the eyes of men, so those who sleep appear as dead to the eyes of the Lord. When he saw a brother sleeping long and comfortably, especially if he heard him snore, he could hardly bear it. He took no food for the gratification of sense, but solely to relieve exhaustion ; and when the hour of eating arrived, he looked upon it as one of punishment. He had so completely conquered the greediness of the stomach, that he could hardly distinguish one sort of food from another by the taste. He one day took a drink of oil, supposing it to be water, and did not discover his mistake."

"He used to say to the novices who presented themselves for admission, "If you would be admitted into this house, leave at the door the body that you bring with you from the world. The spirit only can enter here ; the flesh is excluded."

"He mortified his body with continual watching, abstinence and labor ; and he was languid and feeble, without interrupting his occupations."

Such was the ascetic life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, by far the most famous, and, bating his superstition, certainly the best ecclesiastic of his day. We find two anecdotes in this legend, which we will copy, though the first has no connection with monachism, and the second can hardly bear translation.

"One day Bernard was riding on horseback along the road, in company with a peasant ; and, in the course of conversation, complained of the distractions which beset the mind of man in prayer. When the peasant heard this, he conceived a mean opinion of the saint, and said, that for his own part, nothing could make his thoughts wander when he was praying. Bernard

wishing to convince him of his rashness in making such an assertion, said to him, "Well, then, let us see whether you can: just step aside a little way, and repeat the Lord's prayer with as fixed attention as you can; and if you can go through it without distraction of mind, or thinking of anything else, you shall have this horse on which I am riding. I rely upon your good faith to tell me, if you think of anything else during the prayer." The peasant was rejoiced, thinking the horse to be his own; so he went a little distance from the road, and began to repeat the Lord's prayer. He had hardly got half through, before his mind was carried away by the thought, "I wonder if I am to have the saddle, as well as the horse." Then he returned to Saint Bernard, and confessed what had occurred to him. After that he never indulged such a presumption of his steadfastness in prayer."

Before we come to the other anecdote, which is of a very different sort, we shall preface it with a little miracle, which comes between in the legend.

"In one of the monasteries which Bernard had founded, they were troubled with an enormous quantity of flies. The servant of God, being there one day, said, 'I excommunicate the flies.' On the next day they found that every fly of them was dead."

The following story of a miracle should not appear upon our pages, if it did not bring to view and illustrate a very singular superstition concerning demons. We will endeavor to avoid any disgusting language, though the facts of the story are disgusting, in any way that we can state them.

"There was in Aquitaine an unfortunate woman, who was possessed by a demon *Incubus*. During six years he had subjected her to his excessive lust. When the man of God came into that country, the demon forbade her to have recourse to him, saying that it would avail her nothing; and that, if she did, she would find in him no longer a lover, but an unrelenting persecutor. But she nevertheless called for the saint, and described to him with many groans what she had suffered. Bernard said to her, 'Take my staff, and put it by your side in the bed; and then, if the

demon can do any thing, let him do it.' When she had gone to bed with the staff at her side, the demon came as usual to the bed, but the staff prevented him from proceeding farther. Then he threatened, in a great rage, that when Bernard was gone, he would inflict a terrible revenge upon her. When she told this to the saint, he ordered that all the people about the house should assemble, each with a lighted candle in each hand; then he pronounced an anathema against the demon, and forbade him ever again to approach that woman. The effect was, that she was never again troubled with this sort of illusion."

This strange superstition was of ancient origin. That oppression of the breast in sleep, which we call nightmare, was called Incubus by the Latins, and Ephialtes by the Greeks, signifying something that oppresses by lying on a person. The common people among the Greeks, Romans, and Scandinavians, imagined it to be a demon. Among our Saxon and German ancestors, it was the hag or witch that was supposed to sit upon the sleeper's breast. Our term nightmare, is from the Scandinavian term *mara*, which signifies *incubus*, or hag of the night.

To account for the superstitious notion exhibited in the above story of the woman,—which notion, by the by, was not unknown among the ancient Romans,—we have only to connect the idea that the night-mare is a demon, with the idea mentioned in our account of Philo's doctrines, that angels or demons begot the giants mentioned in Gen. vi.,—a notion current in the Church after the Platonic Fathers arose; and it is easy to conceive how a superstitious woman could dream——.

Borri, one of the Jesuit missionaries to Cochin China, (quoted before in Ch. iii.,) in his account of that country, gives a curious example of the existence of the same superstition among the Boodhists of those regions. We shall extract the whole passage.

"It remains (says he) to show how God acted conformably to the mean, vulgar people of Cochin China, who were accustomed to see phantoms, visions, and apparitions. The Devil often ap-

pearing to them, [God] was pleased to show some miracles, to the end that, declining in their opinion of diabolical prodigies, they might own the only Lord and sole worker of true wonders. The devils appear so frequently among those heathens, that, not to speak of the oracles they deliver by the mouth of idols, which are in great esteem among the wretched Gentiles, they walk about the city so familiarly in human shapes, that they are not at all feared, but admitted into company; and this is carried so far, that there are abundance of Incubi and Succubi.\* And among great people, husbands account themselves happy, when they know their wives to have such familiars; for generally they have to do with none but married women; publicly boasting that they are worthy to mix with a nature so much above their own as is the devil's [or demon's]. It happened in my time, that a woman of great quality, mother of two sons who were Christians [converted by the Jesuits], was envied by her neighbors, not so much for her beauty, as for her dishonest familiarity with a devil; and, positively refusing to become a Christian, happened to die in labor, having by the assistance of the devil brought forth two eggs.

“Now, it being held as most certain among them, that her Incubus was god of the rivers, they did not bury the body, but, carrying it in solemn procession to a river, cast it with the two eggs into the deep, saying, “Let her go to the lord of the river, since she was worthy to have to do with him when living.” Among the common sort of people, this filthiness is not esteemed an honor; but they rather count it a grievous distemper, when their women are thus molested by the devil, as we should, if ours were possessed by the devil. These women, therefore, understanding that the religion of the fathers [the Jesuits] was altogether opposite to the devil, they imagined that they might have some medicine against this distemper, calling holy things medicines—such as the water of baptism, *Agnus Deis*,\* and the like, and therefore came to our

\* As the Incubus lay *on*, so the Succubus, as the name imports, lay *under*.

† *Agnus Deis* are little images made by the Roman Catholic priests of consecrated wax. They are a sovereign protection against devils, thunder, and many other things.

house to beg such medicines; and, by the grace of God, all those that carried away with them any bit of *Agnus Dei*, were never more molested by the devil; yet with this difference, that those who were not Christians, saw the Incubus come to the bedside, but without power to lay hold on or touch their persons; whereas the Christians [baptized natives] perceived that he could not come near the chamber-door, *which occasioned several to be baptized.*

Though these Incubi devils, appearing in human shape, do no harm to the body, yet sometimes there are others that appear in horrid and frightful shapes; and the Cochin Chinese who have often seen, describe them after the same manner *as we paint them*; for example, with a cock's foot, a long tail, a bat's wings, a hideous look, bloody, flaming eyes; and when they appear in such shapes, they are much feared, being then generally hurtful to men, sometimes carrying them up to the tops of houses to cast them down headlong. We once heard a wonderful noise of people in our street, crying out very loud, "*Magui Maes,*" that is, the devil in a monstrous shape: whereupon some Gentiles came running to beseech, that as we had weapons against those evil spirits, we should go and relieve those who were infested by them. Having recommended ourselves to God, and armed ourselves with crosses, *Agnus Deis* and relics, two of us went to the place where the devil was, and came so near, that we only wanted turning round a corner to be upon him, when he suddenly vanished, *leaving three prints of feet upon the pavement, which I saw, and were above two spans long, with marks of a cock's talons and spurs.* Some attributed the devil's flying to the virtue of the holy cross. These frightful apparitions God made use of to attract many to his holy faith."\*

The author mentions, as another efficacious means of converting these heathen, an apparition, seen by a multitude of people, of the Virgin Mary flying through the air.

From this specimen the reader can judge what sort of Christian

\* See Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vol. ix, page 823.

missionaries these holy fathers were, what sort of means they used for making Christians, and what sort of Christians they made.

But this curious account of demons and their doings presents another point of the close resemblance, shown in the Introduction, between Asiatic Boodhism and European Romanism. The Romish missionaries had, in fact, little to do in order to convert Boodhists, but to persuade them to substitute Christian names for those of Boodhism, and to make a few other changes. Whether the converts of these Jesuits were any better Christians after their baptism than before, is somewhat doubtful: whether they were better men, is very doubtful.

NOTE.—We shall add here an instance taken from the historian Procopius, to show that the belief in Incubi existed in Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Justinian, about the year 500. “The mother of Justinian often confessed that she had him not by Sabbatius, her husband, but by an Incubus, that kept her company. As to Theodora,—his wife, an infamous woman, they who had been her gallants when she was an actress, related that demons, or nocturnal spirits, had often driven them away to lie with her themselves.” (See Jortin’s Remarks, A. D. 527.)



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ST. BASIL AND HIS CENOBITES.

AFTER Antony in Egypt and Hilarion in Palestine began to collect societies of monks, monachism spread like wild-fire among all the Eastern Christians. It soon pervaded Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the provinces of Asia Minor. It was first disseminated through Cappadocia, Pontus, and Armenia—countries about the Euxine or Black Sea—by Eustathius, Arian bishop of Sebastia, an Armenian city, in the first half of the fourth century.

But the great Basil, Bishop of Cesarea in Cappadocia, may be deemed the father, or at least the regulator, of monachism among the orthodox trinitarians of those provinces. He first reduced Christian monachism to the form which it has substantially retained to this day. We shall therefore give a brief sketch of his life, taken chiefly from Helyot.

Basil was of a pious family. His father was a miracle-worker. His grandfather was driven by persecution into the wilderness, where God nourished him by sending him deer for food. After the persecution, the family returned home and prospered. The father of the great Basil bore the same name; his mother's name was Eumilia. They lived near Cesarea in Cappadocia, where our spiritual hero was born about the year 329.

In his childhood he was dangerously ill. His parents finding all human remedies unavailing, resorted to the prayer of faith.

That night Christ appeared to these afflicted parents and promised them the recovery of their son. Afterwards they sent the boy to Neocesarea, where his grandmother Macrina lived. She taught him the doctrines of the true faith, in which she had been instructed by Gregory the wonder-worker. At seven years of age he returned to his parents. His father taught him the human sciences. Then he studied at Cesarea in Palestine, where he became acquainted with Gregory Nazianzen. Thence in his twelfth year, he went to Constantinople, where he studied for a long time. Then he returned home to Cesarea in Cappadocia, and went thence to Alexandria to attend the schools there ; but finding them not to be what he wanted, he repaired to Athens. He was now seventeen years old. At Athens he again met with Gregory Nazianzen, and here arose between them the intimate friendship which lasted till death.

Gregory having been here before him, did him a service at the beginning of his course. By representing to his friends in the Athenian School, the great wisdom and reputation which Basil had already acquired, he saved him from undergoing a certain degrading ceremony, which the students at Athens used to impose upon new comers, who, in the modern slang dialect, were considered as *green*. Basil had had so little experience of this sort of insult, that he would have left Athens rather than submit to it.

He was the aptest scholar of his time, and soon became very learned under the instructions of Libanius and other professors. He became a thorough proficient in cosmography, astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic ; and his frequent ailments occasioned him to study medicine also. But all these worldly sciences could not make him neglect theology, which he had studied from his childhood.

Here the two friends, Gregory and Basil, had as a fellow student Julian, afterwards surnamed the apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great. These saints (says Helyot) made acquaintance with

him, and detected in his physiognomy the disorderly character of his mind.

After ten years study at Athens, Basil returned to his native city of Cesarea, where his mother, who was now a mourning widow, desired the consolation of his presence. At first he practised law ; then he commenced a course of office-seeking. But his sister Macrina was afraid that ambition, vanity, and love of honor might ensnare his heart ; therefore she fitly admonished him, that he should abandon this wrong course, quit all worldly pursuits, and devote himself to the service of God. He took the matter into consideration ; and then as he said himself, he awoke as it were out of a deep sleep ; he saw the true light of the Gospel, and the inutility of the vain sciences which he had been studying. He now felt disgust at the world and its vanities. He resolved to withdraw from them, and to seek a person who could guide him in the way to perfection.

With this view he undertook a journey to the places, where, according to report, such persons were to be found as lived in the full practice of the evangelical rules. He travelled into Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, where he had the satisfaction to meet with many of those solitary men whom he sought ; for monachism had spread over all these provinces. He admired their strenuous ascetism and manual industry. He was astonished, when he saw how these admirable men resisted sleep, lust, hunger, thirst, cold and heat ; how in all sorts of corporeal destitution, they kept their spirits free from worldly care, and elevated to God ; and lived regardless of their bodies, as if the flesh were no part of themselves, and as if they were strangers on the earth and already citizens of heaven.

Returning to Cesarea after two years absence, his bishop, Dianeus, made him reader in the Church, and this detained him there. But this office could not suppress his desire for solitude, in which he might devote himself to the imitation of those examples which he had seen in the deserts. He joined himself first to people in his own country, who seemed to carry out this sort

of life in practice. Their external observances of ascetic severity, and penitential mortification of the body, made Basil believe that they were inwardly holy. He took their coarse, rough mantle, and their shoes of undressed hides, as sure signs of virtue. He believed that he could not be too closely united to such people, who preferred a life of hard self-denial and labor to the pleasures of the world. *But he afterwards found that he had been deceived in his good opinion of these people. They were disciples of Eustathius, Arian bishop of Sebaste, who afterwards became the chief persecutor of our saint.\**

About the year 357 (when he was twenty-eight years of age) he thought seriously of betaking himself to solitude. He chose a place in a desert of Pontus, by the river Iris, near the little city of Ibora. This place had served for his early education, and he went thither on account of his sister Macrina, who, with his mother, St. Eumelia, had settled there.

But he left this desert again, to go to Constantinople with St. Basil, of Ancyra. He soon returned, but left his retirement to attend upon the death-bed of his bishop, Dianceus. Eusebius, his successor, retained Basil from going again to his desert. He ordained him priest, and for a while used his assistance in governing his diocese. But afterwards the bishop became jealous of him; and Basil found it necessary to return to his brethren in the desert, and enjoy the solitude which he had left with reluctance.

But Basil was too needful to the Church to remain long shut up in his monastery. In the course of three years, Eusebius found how much he heeded his help, to enable him to withstand the undertakings of the Emperor Valens, who had resolved to introduce the Arian doctrine into Cesarea. Therefore he applied earnestly to Gregory Nazianzen to mediate a reconciliation with Basil, and bring him back to Cesarea. Basil, who had forgotten

\* Monkeny relies upon its *exercises* to sanctify the soul. Here were monks who practised them fully; yet no sooner does an orthodox saint discover that these monks are Arians, than he deems them to be unsanctified hypocrites; their *exercises* avail nothing!

every cause of displeasure, returned without delay to his bishop ; and, with the help of his friend Gregory, made an attack upon the Arians, who had attempted to take advantage of his misunderstanding with Eusebius, and withdrawal from Cesarea. He compelled them to leave the place.

After the flight of these heretics,\* Eusebius, who had been heartily reconciled and knew the great abilities of Basil, left the management of his diocese entirely to him. He fulfilled the office so well, that after the death of Eusebius, he was chosen bishop.

No sooner was he raised to this dignity than the heretics, especially the Arians, began to persecute him violently. These latter having the patronage of the emperor, often abused their power against him, and influenced the emperor's mind to his prejudice.

The emperor, when Basil refused to obey his order to commune with the Arians, resolved to banish him. When the order for that purpose was brought to him for signature, *his pen broke three several times before he could write his name ; and when he still persevered, his hand trembled so that he could not write, and the seat broke on which he was sitting.* Now convinced of the impiety of his proceeding, he took the paper and tore it up.

Not only from the Arians, but from Catholic bishops, did Basil suffer persecution all his days. Some were moved by envy, some by the tales which his enemies told of him,—and some again, because he had manifested friendship for Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, before he knew of his baseness, [that is, his Arian opinions] ;—and others, finally, because he had had some friendly intercourse with the heretic Apollonaris, and his disciple Dioscurus, before they displayed their venom.

As to his ascetic severities, they were almost incredible ; and it must be considered a miracle (says Helyot) that he was able to bear them with his tender and sickly frame. He ate but once a

\* We are not explicitly told, but the language employed—"he attacked," "compelled them to take flight, &c.,"—implies, that by his eloquence he raised a mob against them. Church disputes were often decided in those days by mob-law, in administering which the monks and the swinish multitude were chief actors.

day, in the evening, and often satisfied himself with bread and water. He exercised continual watching; and when he took a little rest, it was upon a hard couch. But with all his bodily weaknesses and suffering, his spirit, animated by the spirit of God, retained its extraordinary vigor to the last.

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*Of the Monks of St. Basil.*

When St. Basil resolved to become a monk, he retired into the wilderness of Pontus, to avoid the noise of cities. His object in going to Pontus rather than elsewhere, was to be near his sister Macrina, who had already founded a nunnery there, over which she presided, having received no little help from her brother Peter, afterwards bishop of Shaste. The virtues of Peter had already made the deserts of Pontus renowned.

St. Basil was followed by Gregory Nazianzen, and multitudes of others; insomuch that the remotest deserts of that country were crowded like a city, by the numbers that collected to profit by his instructions and example. So he founded a monastery near his sister's nunnery, because the desert could not accommodate the multitudes who gathered around him.

St. Gregory Nazianzen admired the unity and love that bound all these monks together, and the burning zeal with which they stirred one another up to virtue.

Basil, after he was himself satisfactorily instructed in the truth—says Rufin—went through the cities and villages of Pontus; and by his preaching excited the inhabitants, who had been in a state of torpor and indifference about their salvation. He wished to rouse them from their listless condition. He succeeded in persuading many to renounce the pursuit of vain and transitory things, and to unite in the service of God. He taught them to build monasteries, form communities, and practice all the exercises of the monastic life.

He was equally solicitous about the women, and taught and

instructed them how they should educate virgins, in order to make them worthy brides of Christ.

Thus, in a short time, the whole province was converted from a barren waste into a fruitful field. Almost every body began to lead a pure and chaste life. Many renounced the world, sold their goods, and laid their price at the saint's feet. He took care to have them distributed among the poor.

Now the founder of these monasteries, the better to secure the virtue and piety of the monks, committed to writing the constitution and rules which they had to observe. They were of two sorts : the one more extended, and comprised in fifty-five chapters ; the other consisting of three hundred and thirteen rules, briefly expressed.

The preface to these smaller rules, makes it apparent that Basil was, when he wrote them, a minister of the Word of God,—that is, either a priest or bishop in Cesarea. He wrote them, therefore, after the year 361, when he was ordained priest.

The institution thus founded by St. Basil, spread rapidly ; and the monks of this order came before the founder's death to be counted by tens of thousands. His rule superseded others in the Eastern provinces ; and after Rufen translated it into Latin, it was extensively adopted in the West. St. Benedict of Italy, who founded afterwards the most numerous body of monks in Europe, drew his rule chiefly from that of St. Basil.

So far, we have followed Helyot's account of St. Basil and his Cenobites. We add a few particulars from other sources.

St. Basil collected the monks who had been leading solitary lives, into communities located near cities and towns. He differed from all previous founders in placing his establishments among the haunts of men and in connection with general society, like the more modern monasteries. He aimed to make the cloisters a sort of schools for the training of young persons in religion, and qualifying them for the priesthood.

He conformed to the general custom of monastic institutions in those early times, in requiring his monks to labor for their own

support and for the poor. The scheme of monkish mendicancy was not yet approved. The beggar monks of the age were in bad repute.

Helyot says that St. Basil was the first who imposed upon his monks the triple vow of chastity, poverty and obedience, which was rigidly exacted in more modern times. But Bingham shows that no solemn vow of this sort was required in the fourth and fifth centuries. The custom was to subject novices to a trial of three years, during which they were exercised in all the observances of the monastic life: if they stood the test, and desired then to become regular members, they were admitted without any formal vows; but with the understanding, as a matter of course, that they would comply with the rules of the monastery. But of this more hereafter.

The common run of sentiment in the Church, from Basil's time onward, was, that a thorough training in all the austerities of monastic discipline, was the best qualification for the sacred ministry. Basil, if he did not originate, at least promoted this notion by his opinion and example. After he became bishop, he ordained scarcely any, if any at all, to the priesthood, except monks; and he preferred those who carried their ascetic practices to the greatest extreme. Those who had reduced their bodies to skin and bones, and had almost learned to do without sleep, like the angels, were deemed best qualified to teach religion. We can readily conceive what sort of religion these holy starvelings would teach.

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We conclude this chapter by observing, that Basil was the last founder of a system of monachism in the fourth and fifth centuries. Thus far there were three successive advances made in regulating Cenobite monachism: 1st. Antony merely collected his disciples into a neighborhood of separate cells, where each monk dwelt alone; 2dly. Pachomius put three into a cell, but subjected them to rigid rules of silence and non-intercourse; and 3dly. Basil brought his disciples out of the deserts into populous neighbor-



hoods, and into a closer association under a code of rules. Finally, in the latter half of the sixth century, Benedict founded in Italy his order of monks on the modern plan, though still requiring them to labor for their own support.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OF THE ANCIENT LAURES OF PALESTINE.

THE Laure was a peculiar sort of monastery, invented for the purpose of combining, as perfectly as possible, the solitary life of the Anchorites with the government and discipline of the Cenobites. It consisted of a circle of cells, some distance apart, built round a cenobium or common hall in the centre, where the common property of the members was kept, and a church in which they met weekly to take the sacrament.

The reported founder of this sort of monastery was St. Chariton, who is said to have founded the first one in Palestine as early as the year 314. But the stories concerning St. Chariton are not well authenticated, and are inconsistent with themselves.

In the fifth century St. Euthymus built a laure, four or five miles from Jerusalem, and governed it as abbot. This became famous in the East. The holy abbot refused to admit any one into it until he was old enough to have a beard of respectable growth. Sabas and Quiriaz, who became notable saints, applied for admission before they had the requisite quantity of hair on their chins. St. Euthymus, therefore, sent them to the monastery of St. Theotist, in the country below, to stay until they could present themselves with a suitable appendage to their faces. When they did so, he took them in.

Sabas was a native of Cappadocia. When he was a boy eight years old, he entered the monastery of Flavian, near Mutalasco, his birthplace. Ten years afterwards he removed to Palestine,

and after remaining a while in St. Passarion's monastery, he went to St. Euthymus, to live under his guidance. But the holy abbot thinking he was much too young to live among the forest anchorites in the laure, sent him to the convent below, as before mentioned.

As they had begun here to relax somewhat of the severe ascetism of former times, Sabas left the place and went to the wilderness of St. Gerasimus, near the Jordan. After spending four years in this solitude, he again removed, at thirty-nine years of age, and took up his abode in the rocky cavern of a mountain, that rose from the brook Kedron, three miles from Bethlehem. Here he lived five years alone, employed wholly in the business of his own salvation. But now God gave him the desire to contribute also to the salvation of others. He built there a famous laure, and collected seventy anchorites, who put themselves under his guidance. The number afterwards increased to one hundred and fifty. Great, however, as were the unity, love and good behavior, which he maintained among them; yet some raised a disturbance, and were so bold as to undertake to deprive him of his dignity as abbot. They went to the Patriarch Sallustius in Jerusalem, and represented to him that Sabas was a coarse simpleton, and incapable of governing such a number of monks; and that he had silly scruples of conscience about the priestly office, having never been ordained himself, nor yet permitting any of his monks to be ordained.

Sallustius was aware of the merits of Sabas; and although he pretended to listen to their complaints, he ordained Sabas as priest, and said to those false brethren, This is your Superior, not by the choice of men, but by election of God, who has placed him over you.

Sabbas built other monasteries near his laure, and into them he put new applicants to be trained.

Afterwards he was made Exarch, or General-Superior, of all the monks in the wilds, deserts, and laures of Palestine; and he devoted all his time to this important charge.

The factious monks of his laure gave him so much trouble, that he resolved to leave them, that he might be delivered from their malice. He retired, therefore, into other deserts. When the patriarch of Jerusalem compelled them to receive him again, they preferred to leave the place themselves. Forty of them went to a laure called Suca; but, being refused admittance there, they took refuge in some deserted cells near the brook Tekoa, and built others with the view of establishing a new laure.

The zeal of Abbot Sabbas for these mutinous monks, kept him in a state of holy unrest. When he knew that they were in need, he collected a sum of money for their relief—gave them a title to the cells which they occupied—took a journey expressly to supply their wants, and built them a church to complete their establishment. Thus did he conquer them by kindness, and they voluntarily put themselves under his authority.\* He watched so diligently over his monks, that the poison of heresy did not get among them; and he converted some Nestorian monks to orthodoxy. This holy Abbot died in the year 531, at the advanced age of ninety-two years.†

\* While the conduct of these mutinous monks argues ill for their profession, the conduct of Sabas is a beautiful exemplification of Christian benevolence.

† Curzon, in a late work entitled "Visits to Monasteries in the Levant," describes the present state of the Monastery of St. Sabba, where this saint founded his laure in the fifth century. The present buildings, on the mountain side over the valley, of the Kedron, were erected in the middle ages, and have the strength of a fortress. "It was in one of the caves of these rocks (says Curzon) that the renowned St. Subba passed his time in the society (according to the legend) of a pet lion. He vowed never to eat apples. He was founder of a laure near this spot. Hermits and Quietists are still found in the clefts of rocks and in the deserts of the East. They rebuke the regular priests, because they do not go so far as themselves in their mortifications, though they fast one hundred days in the year, and always rise to midnight prayer. In one of the courts of the monastery is a palm tree, said to have been planted by St. Subba, and to be endowed with miraculous properties. No palm trees are now found elsewhere in the country, except in the valley of the Jordan.—CURZON VISITS, &c., Chap. 15.

We spoke above of the monastery of St. Gerasimus. It was near a laure of seventy cells, into which novices trained in the monastery were brought. Here they observed a more austere ascetism, and a more complete solitude. For five days in the week they confined themselves to their cells, taking no nourishment but bread and water, and a few dates. On Saturdays and Sundays they came to the church to take the Lord's Supper. Then they ate a little cooked food, and drank a little wine. After vespers on Sunday evening, they returned again to their cells, where they employed themselves in work and prayer. They were not allowed to have either fire or light in their cells, reading being no part of a monk's business. When they went out of their cells, they were required to leave their doors open, to signify that they had nothing of their own, and that others might do as they pleased with what they had.—*Helyot*.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

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### SUNDRY PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO EARLY MONACHISM.

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#### SECTION 1.—MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF THE FATHERS.

##### *Isidore of Pelusium.*

HE flourished about the commencement of the 5th century. He was a monk-priest of Pelusium—an honest, sensible man, but like nearly all his contemporaries, a great admirer of celibacy and monkery. His works consist of a great number of epistles, which exhibit a classical refinement of taste, and a genius for satire, not common among the Fathers. The translated extracts that follow, will, doubtless, amuse the reader, and give him (if he has not read the Fathers) some farther insight into the manners of the monks and the character of the age.

##### VAGRANT MONKS.

##### *Book I. Epistle 41. To Philip, a Monk.*

They say that the hare, a timid animal, shifts from bed to bed, because it is disturbed by every noise. But not so the monk, who ought to trust in God, and to dwell securely in Mount Zion. Why, then, do you shift from place to place, when you ought to lean upon the Lord with confidence, and to exercise yourself with bearing the cross? You seek, it seems, a fatter table instead of

more solid instruction. So it will be, I apprehend, that, passing through all the cities of Israel, and all the borders of the land, with such a stomach and such a disposition of mind, you will be a sort of Euripus,\* carried about by every wind of kitchen odors, and ever restless and unsettled.

*Epistle 173. To Mark, a Vagrant Monk.*

Oh thou inconstant! They who, like thee, lack steadiness of mind, are by the prophet likened to dust which is driven over the face of the earth. For, as thou wast planted and watered by blessed Ammon, we supposed that thou wouldst bear fruit also. But now thou strollest from house to house, not to gain instruction, but from a craving desire after nice dinners.

*Epistle 314. To Pelagius, the Monk.*

Years have brought grey hairs upon you, and still you have a mind that bends not to time or experience: you still move about from monastery to monastery, scrutinizing and exploring all tables. Well, if the flavor of meats, and the spice of vegetables, be your chief concern, go rather and fawn upon the magistrates, and investigate the kitchens of cities; for the hermits have not the means of entertaining you agreeably to your taste.

NOTE.—From these epistles of Isidore, it appears that the love of good eating began already to manifest itself among the monks.

MONKISH COSTUME.

*Book I. Epist. 220. To the Pelusiate Monks.*

The show of a cloak and a long beard, is no sure sign of a religious life.

NOTE.—The cloak and long beard worn by the monks, were imitated from the heathen philosophers, who thus distinguished themselves.

\* A narrow strait in Greece agitated by irregular tides.

## CONCERNING WOMEN.

*Book I, Epistle 89. To Isidore, the Bishop.*

All should, if possible, avoid the company and conversation of women, because they tend to soften the mind. But as this cannot always be done, we should take care to fix our eyes upon the ground when we speak with them.

*Epistle 90. To the same.*

Women were allowed by the Apostles to sing in the Church. But as all sacred things are perverted, this too became an occasion of dissoluteness and sin to many. As the Divine hymns did not affect them deeply, they abused the sweetness of song to excite unholy passions, esteeming sacred music to be no better than the songs of the theatre.

QUERE.—Do not some members of church choirs in our time, as well as some of their hearers, regard sacred music as a mere entertainment, like the songs of a theatre?

*Epistle 367. To the Nuns who frequent Cities.*

If you have no regard either to the modesty of nature, or to the monastic life, and no fear of the vanities which cities present both to the eyes and to the ears, nor of the punishments threatened against them, then you do well to frequent cities; otherwise fly the tumultuous war which persons encounter in such situations.

NOTE.—Nunneries were yet new institutions; but many of the nuns, it appears, like many of the monks, would not stick to their cells.

*Book II., Epistle 53. To Hieracius, the Priest, on the Ornament of Women.*

Those women who cannot conceal the infirmities of their sex, —if they be handsome and rich—glory in precious stones set in



gold. But if they be ugly and poor, then they try to improve their looks by painting their cheeks and drawing colored circles round their eyes. They who desire the reputation of honesty, and are content with the beauty that nature gave them, devote their attention to the improvement of the soul. They pay a moderate attention to the body, as the organ of the soul, but they disdain to dress it up with ornaments. They keep it in its subordinate place, lest they should exhibit an incentive to lust.

To this purpose I think the following true story is worthy of being told :

A young man, very fond of women, fell in love with a beautiful virgin, and used every art to gain possession of her. But she, noble and chaste, rejected his suit, having consecrated her virginity to Christ. But hearing that he had been driven mad by her refusal, she thought of a way to preserve her virginity and to cure him of his passion. She shaved her head and eyebrows, and put on coarse, ill-fashioned clothes. Thus accoutred, she sent for him, and when he came, she thus addressed him : Is this the ugly creature that you love ? The sight completely cured him of his passion ; and not only so, but kindled in his heart the love of chastity.

*Book III., Epistle 351. To Antonius Scholasticus.*

[In this Epistle Isidore argues against the expediency of marriage, on the ground of its cares and troubles ; while he extols the superiority of virginity as free from this objection, and as opposing vices which marriage favors. In this view of the matter, all the Fathers concurred. On no subject do they agree better than on this.]

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*St. Basil of Cesarea.*

We have already given some account of this great founder of monasteries. We shall add here only a few notes and brief quotations from his writings.

In Epistle 199 he says, "By the gift of God, the Church is becoming stronger, and the number of virgins is increased." Thus he makes the strength of the Church consist, in great part, of the professed virgins, whom he calls "the brides of Christ."

His book on virginity contains, in chapters v.—vii., an obscene description of the incitements to lust by the senses of taste and touch. He enters into such minute and filthy specifications, as to suggest to his virgin readers the very thoughts and feelings which he was exhorting them to avoid. Such obscenities are not rare in the writings of the monkery-loving Fathers; but we must, in our judgment of them, make allowance for the manners and customs of those times, which admitted of a directness of expression on certain matters, not now spoken of in plain terms, except by the most vulgar people. Still, however, these Fathers are not to be excused for rioting, as they sometimes do, in filthy ideas, even when their object is to excite disgust against marriage, and against the unlawful indulgence of the passions. We would not justify the coarse obscenities of Rabelais on that account.

Speaking of the duties of the monks, he prescribes (Epist. 223) that they should wear coarse, humble garments, a belt and shoes (or moccasins) of raw hide. This sort of shoe was commonly worn by them, when they wore any. In Epistle 2, he says that solitude puts to sleep the vicious motions of the mind, and leisure affords a way of cutting them entirely out of the mind.

For food he prescribes bread, water and beans, without salt, which, in his Book on Virginity, he says excites lust.

A monk must have sad, downcast eyes, filthy, tangled hair, mean dirty clothes, &c.

In Epistle 32, he says that monks (his models of Christian virtue) must take no pleasure in food or drink. They must not consider themselves as their own masters; but be, under God, slaves to the will of their brethren in the society. They were to eat and drink only with the approbation of their monastic superiors. They must not do even laudable things without the abbot's will.

Many, says he, in Epistle 42, have begun the solitary life, but few have (αειως) worthily carried it out. No wonder, say we.

Concerning demons, he says, in his Commentary on Isaiah, ch. ii., that they rule in the air and fly about like birds. They snuff the vapor of burnt sacrifices, by which they are nourished. They delight in smells and fumes of incense. Perhaps, says he, there is in animals some affinity with the *bodies* of demons. Demons (says he again) are like bats; they hate the light, and fly about, though incorporeal (that is, their bodies are not of solid matter); they are desirous of carnal things, as if they had the nature of flesh. As bats are neither birds nor beasts, so demons are neither angels nor men. Demons have a knowledge of human diseases and their cure; and through their perspicacity they foresee future events.

Such were Basil's notions of demons. In our chapters on the heathen philosophy, especially Platonism, the reader has seen where the Fathers of these times got their doctrines of demons. The New Platonists had precisely the same doctrines.

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*St. Gregory Nazianzen.*

We take a single extract here from this celebrated friend of St. Basil. In his Twelfth Oration he gives the following particulars descriptive of the monastic life:

“Vigils, fasts, prayers, tears, callous knees, smittings of the breast, sighs flowing from the bottom of the breast; standing erect the whole night, the mind going forth to God; meditating day and night on the law of God; gentle weeping in prayer, exciting the hearer's mind to compunction; psalm singing, celebrating the glory of God, exalting God (εν ταις λαυνηι) in the throats; and then those beautiful indications and arguments of a life devoted to God—to wit, *dirty and disordered hair, naked feet, imitating the Apostles, fit and moderate tonsure, clothing repressing pride, girle adorned by neglect of ornament, a scanty cloak, steady walk, eyes not wandering, gentle smile, &c., &c.*

*St. Augustine.*

This distinguished Father was bishop of Hippo in Africa, about the time of Basil and Jerome. He was the ablest doctrinal and controversial divine in the ancient Church, and did more towards forming the system of divinity that has prevailed in modern times, than any other Father. Yet he, too, was an admirer of monachism and a founder of monasteries.

In his great work on the City of God, which is a treatise on theology, he employs several chapters in discussing the doctrine of demons. While he finds some fault with Plato's notions on the subject, he nevertheless adopts, like the other Fathers, the demonology of the heathen philosophy, somewhat modified by the Scripture doctrine. In Book viiii. he argues that the demons are not, by reason of their having *ærial* bodies, any better than men, who will also have immortal bodies after the resurrection, and who excel them in purity of life. He also scouts the idea of their being superior to men on account of their more elevated habitation in the atmosphere, for in that respect the birds also excel us.

In his Book (*De Opere Monachorum*) on the Work of Monks, he opposes the opinion of some monks in the city of Carthage, who thought that they ought to live without work on the offerings of the people. One of his arguments against this opinion is worthy of particular attention, because it shows what classes of persons they were who composed the main body of that vast army of monks, who were considered by the Fathers as the quintessence of all that was holy and good in the Church.

"Now," says he, "they, for the most part, come into the profession of monachism from the condition of slaves, being either freedmen before they come, or liberated by their masters for this end; or they come from rustic life, from low trades and plebeian labor. Some of these set forth good example; but *others exhibit no sign of a reformed life; and it appears doubtful, whether they aim to serve God, or to take refuge from poverty and labor in a monastery; where they may be fed in idleness, and be honored by those by whom they were formerly despised.*

Again he says of the monks, that some wore their hair long, contrary to the precepts of St. Paul; and ridiculously argued, that as they had castrated themselves [made themselves eunuchs] for the kingdom of heaven's sake, they were no longer men!

He describes also a class of vagrants in the garb of monks, who went through all the provinces, and had no settled abode. Some sold pretended bones of martyrs; others pretended that they were going to see their kindred in a distant province. All solicited alms, making a profit of their poverty. Like the pharisaical impostors in our Saviour's time, some of them wore broad phylacteries and enlarged the fringes of their garments.

Among the Epistles of St. Augustine we find one addressed to Eedicia, a married woman who lived with her husband as if he were her brother; a sort of self-denial not uncommon among married people, in those times, when absence from sexual intercourse, even in lawful wedlock, was deemed the highest of Christian virtues. This exceedingly pure and pious wife was so very pious, that in her husband's absence, she gave away nearly all that she had, to a couple of vagabond monks.

St. Augustine admonished her not to dispose of her money or goods, without her husband's consent;—"For," says he, "as the bearer of your epistle told me; when your husband discovered that you had given away nearly all that you had to a couple of passing monks, I know not who,—but who pretended that it was to be appropriated to the poor,—*he exclaimed against these beggars, as stealing into houses and plundering them, by taking captive silly women like yourself.*"

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*St. John Chrysostom.*

This eloquent bishop of Constantinople flourished about the same time as the Fathers from whom we have been quoting. The people of Constantinople, to whom he preached, were sunk in luxury and sensuality, devoted to pleasures and amusements, and full of the levity and subtlety of the Greek character. In order

to shame and to restrain their vices, the eloquent preacher often referred to the monks who lived on the mountains and in the deserts ; and whose character, condition and pursuits, were in perfect contrast with those of the Constantinopolitans. Chrysostom, like all the leading clergy of the age, was a great admirer of monkery. We shall give some translated extracts from his voluminous writings, to show how he speaks of the monks.

*Homily VIII.—On Matthew.*

If you go into the Egyptian desert, you will see a solitude superior to any paradise,—six hundred choirs of angels in human form,—a nation of martyrs,—companies of virgins,—the tyranny of Satan broken, and the kingdom of Christ shining forth.

*Homily LXVIII.—On the Same.*

Flying cities and tumults, the monks choose the life of the mountains, which has nothing in common with this life,—suffers nothing human, no grief, no care about worldly things,—no dangers, snares, envy, backbiting, filthy amours, nor any such thing. Here they meditate on heavenly things, and spend their days quietly among woods and mountains, and springs of water,—their conversation with God, their little dwellings free from disturbance ;—their minds unruffled by passion, light, active, and purer than thin air. Their work is like that of Adam in Paradise before he fell, when invested with glory he freely talked with God. Wherein do these monks live worse than he did? He had no earthly care ; neither have they. With a pure conscience, they converse with God, as he did. Nay, they have more confidence in God than he had, for they have more grace of the spirit.

You ought to see these things with your own eyes ; but since you will not, and you live in the bustle and turmoil of the forum, let me describe them to you. We will select a portion of their manner of life, as we cannot describe the whole.

They who are the lights of the world, rise before day, sound, wakeful, ready for action ; for they have no sorrow, nor care, nor

drowsiness, nor labor, nor disturbance of business ; but they live like the angels in heaven. Up, therefore, they rise immediately, brisk and cheerful ; and making one choir, they sing with glad hearts a hymn in praise of the God of the universe.

The dress of these men is worthy of them ; not like the dress of those men who trail their robes along the streets, enervated and effeminate ; but like those of the blessed angels, Elijah, Elisha, John and the Apostles. Some are clothed in goat's hair, some in camel's hair, and some in skins, old and worn.

After the hymn, they bend their knees in prayer for things that many persons never think of. They ask not for present things ; they care nothing about them ;—but that they may stand with confidence before the dread tribunal of the Son of God, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead,—and that with a pure conscience and good works, they may measure this laborious life and tranquilly cross this stormy sea. The Father [abbot] and Governor is their leader in prayer.

Then rising after prayer, they go, when the sun is up, to their work, providing much for the poor.

Where now are those who give themselves to diabolical choirs, and songs of prostitutes, and attend the theatres ? I am ashamed to mention these things, but I must do it on account of your infirmity ; for Paul says, As ye have yielded your members as servants to uncleanness, so now present them as servants to righteousness unto holiness. And now, when we compare that band of prostitutes who corrupt young men on the stage,\* with those blessed men, in what pertains to pleasure—and consider by what sort of pleasure these self-indulgent youth are inveigled by the arts of those women—we shall find as much difference between them, as between the harmony made by angels singing in heaven, and dogs and swine growling and grunting on a dunghill.

\* In Hom. vi. on 1st Thess. ch. iv., he says, "When thou goest into the theatre and sittest, feasting thy eyes upon the *naked members of women*, &c.:" from which it appears that the dancing women were as shameless then as they are upon the modern stage.

Christ utters his voice by the mouths of the former; the Devil utters his by the tongues of the latter.”

Such is the rhetorical picture which Chrysostom gives of the monks. He has drawn it in the fairest colors, and concealed all the darker hues of the reality, in order to heighten the contrast between the lives of the monks and those of the pleasure-seeking Constantinopolitans.

Yet this same eloquent eulogist of the monks found, by experience, that there was a difference between them and the holy angels. By way of comment on his glowing description of their angelic lives, we shall relate a passage in his after life.

Theophilus, a villainous bishop of Alexandria, raised a faction against Chrysostom, and succeeded in getting him deposed and banished. “While he lay at Cesarea after his banishment, the monks of that city, instigated by their bishop, who hated Chrysostom, invested the place where he lodged, threatening to burn the house over his head, if he did not instantly depart. The soldiers quartered in the city came and very civilly desired the monks to be quiet. But the monks set them at defiance, and told them that *they had fought before with their betters, and had beaten and routed the Prætorian troops, and would use them in the same manner, if the least opposition.* So the soldiers intreated Chrysostom to depart, sick and weak as he was; declaring that they could not protect him; “*that the monks were more furious than wild beasts, and that they would rather have to do with an army of the fiercest barbarians, than fight these desperadoes.*”<sup>\*</sup> This account, taken substantially from Chrysostom himself, shows that some monks in those days were more like demons than angels. This instance of their fighting propensities was by no means singular, as we shall show.

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### Section 2. *Fighting Monks.*

In addition to the instance just related, of monks making battle

<sup>\*</sup> This is taken by Jortin (Remarks on Eccl. Hist. A. D. 398) from Chrysostom's own account of the affair in his Epistle, 13 Ad. Olymp.



with clubs and stones, we take the following from Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

In the year 379, St. Gregory Nazianzen and his Consubstantialists [Trinitarians] were assaulted by the Arians of Constantinople. Ancient women (as he says) worse than Jezebels, young nuns, common beggars, and monks, like old goats (*πᾶνες*), issuing out of their monasteries, armed with clubs and stones, attacked him and his flock, in his church, and did much mischief.

In the year 390, the Emperor Theodosius made a law to curb the monks, requiring them to retire to their deserts and caves, and to dwell there. This edict seems to have concerned principally the monks of Egypt and Syria, who, under pretence of zeal, used to frequent the cities, and importune the magistrates to forgive and discharge criminals, and even exciting tumults and seditions, and who often waged open war with Pagans, destroying their idols and demolishing their temples.—See Fleury, IV. 586.

In the year 412, Cyril was made bishop of Alexandria, and soon made himself its lord and master. He was one of the most overbearing, violent, and unprincipled men in this corrupt age. He undertook to rule Alexandria by means of a mob. Some Jews had killed a number of Christians by lying in wait for them. This was a case for the civil magistrate; but Cyril took it upon himself to punish the murderers, and heading a Christian populace, he plundered all the houses of the Jews, guilty or not guilty, and drove all this numerous body of citizens, stripped and ruined, from the city. Orestes, the governor, offended at this behavior, and hating Cyril, because he took upon himself the direction of civil affairs, resolved to oppose and depress him, and would not hear of a reconciliation when Cyril attempted it. But the prelate kept a standing army of dragoons, namely, the Egyptian monks and Alexandrian ecclesiastics, who were always ready to fight his battles. *Five hundred monks came to Alexandria to assist him.* These holy men meeting Orestes in his chariot, first reviled and then assaulted him; and one of them, named Ammonius, flung a stone and wounded him in the head,

while his attendants fled, fearing the volleys of stones, and the fury of the monks. At last the people took courage, and having assembled to rescue their governor, they put the monks to flight. Ammonius was seized, and by the governor's orders put to the rack, and so severely tortured that he expired. Cyril buried him honorably, *and ordered him to be worshipped as a martyr*. Many such things did this prelate perform; but he is nevertheless a canonized saint, and one of the holy Fathers of the Church.

In the year 451, the prelates at the Council of Chalcedon complained of one Barsumas, a monk, who had murdered Flavius, a bishop; and they say of him he overturned all Syria, and *he brought against us a thousand monks*.

In the year 452, Theodosius, a monk, under the pretence of maintaining orthodoxy, stirred up and headed the monks of Palestine, and filled Jerusalem with tumult, set fire to houses, broke open jails, murdered a bishop and some other persons, and caused himself to be elected bishop of Jerusalem. Yet this wretch found means to hide himself, and to escape punishment.—Basnage, III., 474.

Let these instances suffice to show the spirit that prevailed extensively among the monks, between one and two hundred years after monkery began in Egypt.

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*Melancholy and Madness of the Monks.*

Cassian, a great admirer of monkery, describes the listlessness and languor, both mental and corporeal, to which a monk was exposed, when he sighed to find himself alone. "He often (says Cassian) goes into his cell and comes out again, and looks at the sun, as if he thought it was a tedious while going down."—Cassian Institutes, X., 1.

Monks often lost their senses, or committed suicide, as Gibbon remarks in his history.\* They so often went crazy, that in the year 491, a hospital for mad monks was established near Jerusalem.

\* Fleury, VII. 50.

Gregory Nazianzen (says Jortin, Book III.) who celebrating the absurd austerities of the monks of Nazianzen, tells us that some of them, through excess of zeal, killed themselves to be released from this wicked world.

Evagrius, another enthusiastic admirer of monkery, as we showed in our extracts from his history, (Ch. XXVI.) after describing the general habits of the monks, as we have repeatedly described them, says (B. 1. 21.) that a sort of monks who frequented cities, used to resort to the public baths and wash with the women, according to the custom of mixed bathing before noticed in our extracts from Cyprian in Chapter XII. "They go frequently to the public baths, (says Evagrius,) where they keep company and bathe with women. They are so superior to all perturbation of mind, as to do violence to nature itself; they cannot be moved by the look, nor by the touch, nor even by the embrace of a woman, to those things which are conformable to nature. With men they are men, and with women, women; for they desire not to be of one sex, but of both sexes at once."—Evag. I., 21. You may think, perhaps, (says Jortin,) that Evagrius meant to ridicule those monks. 'Tis no such thing; he was very serious.

Tellemont in his Eccles. History says that Pachomius exhorted his disciples to discover without delay their temptations to the wisest of their brethren, by whom they might be exhorted to get the victory over them, lest by concealing them too long, they should be carried to horrible extremities; for he assured them that many upon that account had flung themselves from the rocks, had cut open their bellies, and had killed themselves in various ways. Nothing is more probable, (says Jortin) than that such a course of life should produce melancholy madness.

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*Some Laws concerning Monks and Monkery.*

The laws of the empire forbad civil officers, and all who had public duties to perform, to become monks. In the Theodosian

Code is a law of the Emperors Valentinian and Valens, which speaks with severity of those who forsook their public duties to turn monks.

“Some followers of sluggishness (says the law) deserting the offices of cities, catch at solitude and secret places, and, under the guise of religion, congregate with the assemblies of the monks. Such of these as are found in Egypt, we have ordered to be *dug out of their holes* by the Count of the East, and called back to fulfill their public duties; or, if they fail to return, we have enacted that their goods shall be forfeited and made over to those who fulfil the duties of the public offices which they have deserted.”

Office holders were also forbidden to become priests.

Slaves were forbidden by law from becoming monks without the consent of their masters, until the monkery-loving Emperor Justinian enacted that servants who embraced the monastic life, should, if they proved by a three years' trial that they were worthy of the monastic habit, remain undisturbed, and be free from the power of their masters. Thus monasteries, as St. Augustine said, became places of refuge for slaves, and by Justinian's law for runaway slaves.

Neither husbands nor wives could embrace the monastic life except by mutual consent, as in the case of Ammon and his bride. But while this was the general rule, there were many instances to the contrary. Husbands would forsake their wives, wives their husbands, and sometimes their children also, thus violating their most solemn duties, that they might become monks and nuns. This was most frequently the case in Egypt. The reader has seen an instance in Sulpicius Severus's First Dialogue. Cassian (Collat. xxi. Ch. 9, 10.) relates the case of Theonas, who forsook his wife, after vainly endeavoring to persuade her to imitate him, and betook himself to a cell in the desert of Scetis. The Fathers of the Desert approved of his conduct; though Augus-

tine, Jerome, Basil and other Fathers, condemned such conduct. The superstitious Emperor Justinian enacted a law, by which this scandalous violation of domestic obligations was sanctioned. He permitted the deserting party who embraced a solitary life, to take his or her goods away from the family. But the Church never in those days approved of this law.

Children under age were not permitted to embrace the monastic life without the consent of their parents; and when parents put their children into a monastery, the children had the liberty of withdrawing after they came to be of the proper age. But the growth of monkish superstition led Church councils afterwards to bind children to monachism by the act of their parents.

Justinian also enacted, that parents should not hinder their children from becoming monks or clergymen, when they desired it; nor disinherit them on that account.

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#### *Monastic Vows.*

Monks in those early ages were not bound by any irrevocable vows; if they withdrew and married, their marriages were valid.

As to their renunciation of the world, it was not always understood as a solemn vow of poverty; nor did all the monks adopt the starvation system of the stricter sort. In the life of St. Hilarian, the reader will recollect the vineyards and gardens of the societies under Father Hilarion's superintendence.

There is a remarkable passage in St. Athanasius, in his letter to Dracontius. He says, "When you are a bishop, you may fast and drink no wine; for we have known bishops who were fasters, and monks who were eaters; bishops who abstained from wine, and monks who drank it:—many of the bishops have kept themselves even from matrimony, and monks have been fathers of children."

This class of monks were called Seculars. St. Augustine said that the Church had many, both monks and clergy, who used wives and possessed property.

Jerome, speaking of these secular monks, says, (Epist. iv. Ad. Rusticum), "I have seen some, who, after they had renounced the world, changed only their clothes and their verbal profession, but not their circumstances and manners. They increased rather than diminished their estates; they had the same attendance of servants, the same apparatus at table; their gold was spent in glass and fine wares; and among crowds of guests and swarms of servants, they claimed the title of solitaries." Again (Epist. Ad. Nepotem), he says, "Some are richer as monks than they were as seculars; and some clergymen possess a degree of wealth under poor Christ, which they did not possess under that rich knave the Devil." So it seems, from Jerome's account, that in ancient times as well as in our days, professors of religion were often as worldly-minded as the professed men of the world.

Cassian (Inst. L. iv. c. xv.) says, "What shall we say to these things? We, who, living in community, under the care of an abbot, carry about our private keys; and regardless of our profession, are not ashamed to wear on our fingers the rings with which we seal up our stores;—whom not the boxes and baskets, nor even the chests and store-rooms, suffice to hold the things which we have collected, or received when we left the world;—we who are so inflamed for the vilest trash, sometimes, that if any one presume even to touch with his little finger what we claim as our exclusive property, we are filled with such wrath against him, that we cannot prevent our indignation from showing itself in the agitation of our lips and our whole body."

An imperial law, found in the Theodosian code, is very significant. It forbids Ecclesiastics and those who would be called Continents [or monks], to visit the houses of widows and wards; and sentences them to banishment, if they be found within the precincts of those persons. So severe a law proves the frequency and pernicious effects of such visits.

#### *Government and Discipline of Monasteries.*

**In the Cenobite monasteries the monks were generally divided**

into Decades [Tens], each governed by a Decan; and into Centuries, [Hundreds], each governed by a Centenary. These were, however, themselves subject to the abbot. The office of the decan was to see that every member performed his allotted task. The steward had a general oversight; the decans reported to him, and he once a month to the abbot. (See Jerome, Epist. Ad Eustoch.)

The abbot had great power over the members, who had to pay a slavish obedience to his commands. If any one failed in his duty, the abbot might inflict on him both spiritual and corporeal punishment. The spiritual punishments were censure and interdiction from the spiritual privileges and exercises of the community, until the offender performed the penances enjoined upon him; and then prostrating himself before the abbot, obtained absolution and reconciliation.

The rigor of monkish discipline is apparent from an instance given by Cassian, (Inst. L. iv. c. xx.) A certain brother was taking his turn of a week to attend to the cooking department. In washing the beans one day for dinner, he happened to let *three grains* fall upon the ground. The steward spied these precious grains, thus carelessly dropped, and consulted the abbot about the affair. The pious Father of the monastery condemned the offender as a spiller and a waster of the sacred goods, and suspended him from the prayers of the Church until he should atone for his offence by an adequate penance.

The corporeal punishments were *whipping*, and expulsion from the monastery. Palladius says, (Hist. Laus. c. 6), "In Mount Nitria is a very large church (of a monastery,) in which stand three palm trees, on each of which hangs a whip, one for chastising offending monks, one for rogues, and one for occasional visitors who transgress. The culprit is made to hug the tree, and then to receive the prescribed number of lashes upon his back.

*Spiritual Exercises of the Monks.*

Of the fasting of the monks, we have heretofore said enough.

The Eastern monks had six or seven canonical hours of daily prayer. There were also vigils, or nocturnal congregations. The Egyptian monks generally had but two daily assemblages for prayer, morning and evening; but they joined prayer with their labors at all hours.

In Constantinople was a society of monks called *ακοιμητοι* or Sleepless Monks, because they took it in turn to keep a continual divine service in their Church.

Cassian says (Collat. vii. 23.) that the monks of Egypt first introduced the practice of perpetual vigils, in order to defend themselves against the nocturnal assaults of demons. "So fierce did the demons become (says Cassian), so frequent and open did their assaults appear, that they did not dare all to sleep at once, but took it in turn; some to sleep, while others kept watch with psalms and prayers and readings of the Scripture."

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On several subjects mentioned in this chapter, see Bingham's *Antiquities*, B. vii. c. 1—3.



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